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COLLECTED WORKS OF
PADRAIC H. PEARSE

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SONGS OF THE IRISH
REBELS AND SPECIMENS
FROM AN IRISH ANTHOLOGY
SOME ASPECTS OF IRISH
LITERATURE :: THREE
LECTURES ON GAELIC TOPICS



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DANTA SPIORUISTE SAEÜEAL
SONGS OF THE IRISH REBELS

DIOMBUADÓ TRIALL Ó TULCÁIB FÁIL

GEARÓID NUINSIONN CÉT. (circ. 1573)

DIOMBUADÓ TRIALL Ó TULCÁIB FÁIL,
DIOMBUADÓ IAT ÉIREANN O'PÁGBÁIL !
IAT MÍLIR NA MBEANN MBEACÁC,
INIR NA N-EANG N-ÓIS-EACÁC.

CÍD TÁ MO TRIALL TAR FÁIL ROIR,
AR OTABAIPT CÚIL O'IAÉ FIONTAIN,
DO RSDAR CPOIDE FÁ'N FÓD RINN,
NÍ CAR FÓD EILE ACÉ ÉIREANN.

FÓD IR TRUIME TORADÓ CRANN,
FÓD IR RÉAR-UIÉTNE REARANN,
SEAN-CLÁR IR BRADONAC BARRCÁC,
AN TÍR ÉRADOBAC ÉPUIÉTNEACÉTAC.

• • • • •

DÁ N-ADOMADÓ DIA DÁM TAR M'AI
ROÉTAIN DOM' DÓMAN DÚCÉAIR,
Ó GALLAIB NÍ GEADAINN DUL
SO CLANNAIB RÉAGUIN SACRAN.

A FAREWELL TO FÁL

BY GERALD NUGENT (*circ.* 1573)

Sad to fare from the hills of Fál,
Sad to leave the land of Ireland !
The sweet land of the bee-haunted bens,
Isle of the hoof-prints of young horses !

Albeit my faring is over the eastward ocean,
And my back is turned to the land of
Fionntain,
All heart for the road hath left me :
No sod shall I love but the sod of Ireland.

Sod that is heaviest with fruit of trees,
Sod that is greenest with grassy meadows,
Old plain of Ir, dewy, crop-abounding,
The branchy, wheat-bearing country !

.

If God were to grant me back again
To come to my native world,
From the Galls I would not take it to go
Among the crafty clans of England.

Ó á mbiaó nár baogal mara
fásbáit leapa lúoḡaire,
Mo meánma riar ní réan
Triall ó Dealbna ir do-óéanta.

Slán do'n buíóin féadaim-pe tar n-éir,
Macraó Dúna Doiró ḡeir,
Dáin ir clainde cláir míoé,
Cláir ir raoire rocaíóe.

Were there even no peril of the sea
In leaving the lios of Laoghair,
I shall not deny that my courage would
 droop—
To fare from Delvin is hard !

Good-bye to the band I leave behind,
The lads of Dundargveis,
The songs and minstrelsy of the plain of
 Meath,
Plain of the noblest companies !

Gerald Nugent stood with the Irishry against Elizabeth, probably in Fitzmaurice's wars. Delvin in Westmeath was the seat of his family, and his chief was earl of that ilk. His "Farewell to Fál" was published by Hardiman in 1831, with a metrical English version by the Rev. William H. Drummond. I omit one quatrain.

Ar Céimríor na nGaeocheal

fearraclata ó ghnímh eect. (circ. 1580)

Mo éruais maí táio gaoiúil!
 Annaíh intinn forófraoilíó
 Ar an uair-rí a g tuine díob,—
 A n-uairle uile ar neimní!

Baíamail do beirtear díob:
 Fuigeall tar éir a noioşbaid
 A g a rníomáó o éróilíge a gnead,
 Nó ir líon córraimhe ar otillad,

Nó ir luét báirce fá'r bhríct muir,
 Nó ir orong fuidir ríor a raoşail,
 Nó ir géill i ngeibheannaid gail,
 Éirheannais fá féinn eactrann!

Tugrad a otreine ar táire,
 Tugrad maire ar mí-maire,
 Tugrad meanna ar máoió-meirne,—
 Laoic fearó a naó aiteantair!

• • • • •

II

ON THE FALL OF THE GAEL

BY FEARFLATHA O'GNIVE (*circ.* 1580)

Woe is me for the Gael !
Seldom a mind joyous
At this hour among them,—
All their noble are perished !

A symbol one giveth of them :
The remnant of a slaughter
Tortured by pain of their wounds,
Or a wake-watch returning,

Or a barque's crew that a sea hath whelmed,
Or a band sentenced to death,
Or thralls in Galls' fetters,
Irish under outlanders !

They have bartered strength for weakness,
Comeliness for uncomeliness,
Courage for cowardice,—
Hailed as heroes no longer.

.

U'fearaib fúola ir fát oréna,
Do treadraib uáim uanaróda
I n-áit spairne a nspoiréad reang—
Sáa faicé im oipear Éireann.

Tréir Sall i scluaincib a sceann,
Túir doib a n-áit a bpoirgnead,
Marḡairde uata in sáa oipear,
Cruada ar árdaiḡ donaiḡeas!

Ní aicníḡeann inir lóḡa
Ní uá faicéib fonn-móra,
Cnuic olaoi-péirde i ndiaib an áir:
Diaib raor-Éire 'na Sacraim!

Ní aicníḡeann aicme Saebéal
Danba, buime a macaom,
'S ní aicníḡeann Éire iad-ran,—
Téigir se céile ar a scrutáib.

.

Truaig do Ríḡ Ráda Neimhe
Fá uceadé uúinn ó'r noaoirri-ne
An cat-maoire náir féas ruinn,
Tréad an cat-éraoiris Ériomtáinn.

To the men of Fódla 'tis grief
That foreign oxen have ploughed
In place of their studs of slim steeds
Every green field of Ireland.

Gall-troops in their chiefs' meadows,
White towers where stood their strong-
holds,
Market-places in every countryside,
Ricks on the heights of their hostings !

Lugh's Isle knoweth not
Any of her spacious green fields,
Smooth hills after the slaughter :
Free Ireland will be an England !

The tribe of the Gael knoweth not
Banba, nurse of their heroes,
And Ireland knoweth not them,—
They are both transformed.

.

Woe that the King of Heaven's Rath
To lead us from bondage
Hath not sent us a new Moses,
Tribe of battle-greedy Criomhthann.

Δ Ἐπίονόιο 'ῥα οὐδ' ἀν ἐμῆαδ',
 Ἀν μβιαὶὸ ἀν ὀρεαμ-ρα ἐοιόδε ἀν θεωρηθεαδ'ε
 ἦι ἱρ ρια ὁ ἐαταῖρ-λιὸρ ἔκκινν,
 ἦὸ ἀν μβιαὶὸ ἀν τ-ατ-δοιῶνεαρ ἀγδαῖνν?

ἦὸ ἀν ὀτιοεραὶὸ ἱρτεαδ' ἀν ἐαρηγδαῖρ
 Ὅο ῥλουαῖ ὀαναῖρ νῶύρ-αῖνγιο
 ἦαοῖ-ῥιρέαν ῥλαν, ῥαίρὸ ὁ ῥεκκινν,
 Ἀν ῥῥίμ-εαῖλαῖμ ἐαίρὸ, Colum?

ἢα ἐκῥ ἀν ὀεονυῖαδ' ὀι
 Sacra nuaδ' ὀαρῶ' αῖνν ἔῖρε,
 ὀεῖτ ῖε α ῥινν-ῥι ῖ ῥαῖμ βιοῶβιαδ'
 Ὅο'ν ἱρρε ἱρ ἐαῖρ ἐεῖλεαδ'ῥιαδ'.

.

Fearflatha O'Gnive was Hereditary Bard to O'Neill of Clanaboy. He was of the train of Seaghán an Díomais when he visited Queen Elizabeth in 1562. A paraphrase in English of his "Fall of the Gael" was given in Charles O'Connor's "Dissertations." The text was published by Hardiman in 1831, with a

O Trinity that hath power,
Shall this race be always in exile
Farther off from Conn's city,
Or shall we have a second glory ?

Shall the prophecy come true
For the host of grim strangers
Of the saintly seer of Conn's race,
The pure patriarch Colm ?

If Thou hast consented
That there be a new England named
Ireland,
To be ever in the grip of foes,
To this isle we must say farewell !

• • • • •

metrical English version by Henry Grattan Curran. Sir Samuel Ferguson has given a vigorous but very free metrical translation in his "Lays of the Western Gael." Dr. Sigerson has also translated the poem. I print only twelve of twenty-four quatrains. Both poems are in Deibhidhe.

III

DIA LIB, A LAOCHRAÓ ŠAOIRDEAL!

AOINGUS MAC DAISRE UÍ DÁLAIS cct.
(*circ.* 1580)

DIA LIB, A LAOCHRAÓ ŠAOIRDEAL!
NÁ CLUINTEAR CLAOIRDEACHT OPAIB:
RIAM NÍOR TUILLADHAR MARLA
I N-AM ÉADA NÁ COŠAIB.

DÉANTAR LIB COINGLEIC ÉALMA,
A BUIRDEAN ARM-ŠLAN ŠAOIRTEAC,
FÁ ÉANN BUIR BPEAPANN TÚTCAIR,
PUIRT ÚR-ŠUIRT INRE ŠAOIRDEAL.

MÁ'R AIL LIB AŠRAÓ ÉIREANN,
A ŠARPAÓ CÉIMEANN ŠCRÓDA,
NÁ REACNAIB ÉACHT NÁ IORŠAIL
NÁ ÉADA MIONCA MÓRA.

FEARR BEIT I MBAPPAIB FUAIRBEANN
I BPEITEAM FUAINGEARR ŠPINNMÍEAR,
AS REILS TPODA AR ŠÉINN ÉACTPANN
'ŠÁ BPUIL FEAPANN BUIR RINNFEAR.

GOD WITH YOU, HEROES OF THE GAEL

BY ANGUS MAC DAIGHRE O'DALY (*circ.* 1580)

God with you, heroes of the Gael !
Let no cowardice be heard of you :
Ye have never earned dishonour
In time of battle or of war.

By you be fought a gallant fight,
O pure-armed joyous company,
For the sake of your native soil,
Homesteads and lealands of the isle of the
Gael.

If ye desire to avenge Ireland,
O champions valiantly descended,
Shun not perilous deed nor wrath
Nor many mighty battles.

'Tis better to watch on the tops of the cold
bens,
Though short of sleep, yet gladsome,
Urging fight against the foreign soldiery
Who hold your fathers' land !

má'r mall do nasrao líbre
maḡ life nó lior Teamrao
nó Cairéal na rreab nuaglan
nó mín-clár Cruac na Meaóba,

Oíe cuimne, a clanna míleao,
fonn réio na ríḡ-lior noaiteḡeal,
tug oraió san asrao Tailtean
nó tát críoc maigheac Mairtean,

ní taóca lúit ná lámhaig
tug oraió, a óḡbaó Banba,
beit oib uiramao umal
do mear-fluaḡ surmar ḡallao.

Acet naó deoin le Dia, a Éire,
Sib le céile do conghaín,
ní beio buir mbuaio i n-éinfeacet
as fluaḡ críoc léioimeac lonnoan,

Crao liom eaectrainn 'ḡá bfoḡrao,
ríograo fóola ran oiracet,
'S naó goirctear oíob 'na noúctear
acet ceiteirín cútaíl' coille.

If it be late ye have avenged
The plain of Liffey, or the liss of Tara,
Or Cashel of the fresh bright streams,
Or the smooth plain of Meadhbh's Cruachain,

Want of thought, O clans of Mileadh,
Hath caused your failure to avenge Telltown,
The level land of the kings' white lisses,
Or to hold the widespreading stretches of
Mullaghmast.

Tis no want of strength or skill in arms
That hath caused you, O chivalry of
Banba,
To be humble and obsequious
To the overweening outland horde.

Unless it be not the will of God, O Ireland,
That ye should help one another,
The victory over you united
Shall not be to London's bold battalions.

Grief to me that foreigners proscribe
The kings of Fodla in the land,
And that they should be called in their native
place
Mere skulking wood kerns,

'S iad féin i ngleannaib garbha,
Laoié Uanba, beas dá leatrom,
'S fonn mín an cláir-re Éríomtáin
As fearóam fíocmair easctrom.

Shac rún feill dá bpuil éuca,
Duiréan fial-éupaó gcogta,
'S a liacé namá ar tí a ngonta,
Do beir orm coúlaó corpiac.

An trád beirio laoié Laigean,
Cinn veigfear cláir na gcupaó,
Buairé easctramh an éró-éimprí
Dí m'aigne puibhí rubac.

Dubac bímpé uair eile
Mar beirio buairé na raoirfear
Na Gaill-rí tís tar tonn-muir
Do cómlot garraíó' Gaoidéal.

Lion gleoó de laóiríó Lannguir
Sabat Ragnuill, Dia dá noibeaní
Méio a nguairé ra ngleann-ra
Do éur mo méanma i míneapí.

And that they should wander in wild glens,
The heroes of Banba (tho' this be little of
 their wrong),
While the smooth soil of this plain of
 Criomhthann
Is to the fierce foreign multitude.

Every treacherous design that is moved
 against them,
The band of warlike generous champions,
And all the enemies in wait for their hurt—
'Tis this that troubleth my sleep!

When carry the Leinster heroes
(Chiefs of the good men of the plain of
 champions)
Victory against the bloody-visaged outlanders,
My mind is jocund and jolly!

Sad I be another time
When victory is snatched from our freemen
By these Galls that come over the heaving sea
To undo the chivalry of the Gael.

A battle's fill of blue-bladed heroes
Is Clann Raghnaill—God defend them!
Their great peril in this glen
Hath turned my courage into fear.

Dia leo as luige 'r as éirise,
Tréinfinnir is treire i scáth,
Dia 'na fearann 'r 'na luige leo
Is i scáth cúinte an éata!

God with them lying down and rising,
The strong ones stoutest in stress,
God with them standing or resting,
And in the time of the fighting of the
battle !

IV

Ῥοίρην Όυβ

FEAR SAN AINM CCT. (circ. 1602?)

Α Ῥοίρην, νά βιώθῃ βρόν ορε φά'η έίρης όυτε :

Τά να βράιτρε 'τεάττ τάρ ράιλε ιρ ιαο ας τριαλλ
αρ μυιρ,

Τιοεφατὸ το ράιτουν ό'η βράρα ιρ ό'η Ῥοίη άνοιρ,
ιρ νά ρράραιλ ριον Σπάιννεαδ αρ μο Ῥοίρην Όυβ.

ιρ ραοα αν ρέιμ το λέις μέ λέι ό ινωέ σο οτι
ινδιου

Τρεαρνα ρλείβτε σο ντεαδάρ λέι, ρά ρεολτα' αρ
μυιρ,

Αν έίρνε ιρ άιτ μέ 'λέιμ ι, αιό μόρ αν ρρυτ,
'S bi ceol τέαο αρ ζαδ ταεβ όiom ιρ μο Ῥοίρην
Όυβ.

ιήαρὸ τύ μέ, α βρίοεος, ιρ νάρ βαθ ρεαρρτε
όυτε,

'S σο βρυιλ m'anam ιρτις ι ηςεαν ορε, ιρ νι ινωέ
νά ινδιου,

THE LITTLE DARK ROSE

ANONYMOUS (*circ.* 1602 ?)

Little Rose, be not sad for all that hath
behappèd thee :

The friars are coming across the sea, they
march on the main,

From the Pope shall come thy pardon,
and from Rome, from the East—

And stint not Spanish wine to my Little
Dark Rose.

Long the journey that I made with her
from yesterday till to-day,

Over mountains did I go with her, under
sails upon the sea,

The Erne I passed by leaping, though
wide the flood,

And there was string music on each side
of me and my Little Dark Rose!

Thou hast slain me, O my bride, and
may it serve thee no whit,

For the soul within me loveth thee, not
since yesterday nor to-day,

Ó'fás tú las anbhann mé i ngné 'r i scrút,
Ná feall oim ir mé i ngean oir, a Róirín Dub.

Siubalrainn féin an tóáct leat aghur páraíḡ
ḡuir,et,
Mar fúil ḡo bpaḡainn fúin uait nó páir,et oem'
toil,
A éraoibín cúmhra, ḡeallair tomh-ra ḡo raio
ḡráo aḡat tomh,
'S ḡur b'i fíor-rḡot na Mumhan i mo Róirín
Dub.

A Róirín mín móðamhail na mbán-éioḡ ḡcuinn,
Ir tú ó'fás míle arpaing i ḡearc-lár mo
époirde :
Éaluis liom, a éáo-réar, aḡur fás an tír,
'S ná b'éátoirainn naḡ n'éanrainn bainríḡḡain
óioḡ, a Róirín Dub!

Óá mbiaó reirreáḡ aḡam to éreábhainn i n-aḡaio
na ḡcnoc,
'S óéanrainn poirḡéal i lár an Aírrinn oem'
Róirín Dub,

Thou hast left me weak and broken in
mien and in shape,
Betray me not who love thee, my Little
Dark Rose !

I would walk the dew with thee and the
meadowy wastes,
In hope of getting love from thee, or
part of my will,
Fragrant branch, thou didst promise me
that thou hadst for me love—
And sure the flower of all Munster is my
Little Dark Rose !

Soft modest Little Rose of the round
white breasts,
'Tis thou hast left a thousand pains in the
centre of my heart :
Fly with me, my hundred loves, and leave
the land,
And if I could would I not make a Queen
of thee, my Little Dark Rose !

Had I a yoke of horses I would plough
against the hills,
In middle-Mass I'd make a gospel of my
Little Dark Rose,

Déanfainn póg do'n cáilín ós do dhéara d' hóige
 dom,
 'S déanfainn cleas ar cúl an leapa lem' Róirín
 Dub!

Diaid an éirne 'na tuilteib tréana agus réabfar
 chuic,
 Diaid an fáirise 'na tonnaib deasda is doirtear
 fuil,
 Diaid sac gleann pleibe ar fud éireann is móinte
 ar cruic,
 Lá éigin fuil d' n-éasfaid mo Róirín Dub.

Poems III. and IV. are well known, but they cannot be omitted from any Irish anthology. "God with you, heroes of the Gael," is preserved in the Book of the O'Byrnes. It was first published by Hardiman in 1831, with an English metrical version by Edward Lawson, and has been many times reprinted. Sir Samuel Ferguson's verse rendering is well known. My prose translation owes something to Tomás O'Flannghaile's prose translation in his "Seacht Sár-Dhánta Gaedhilge." The poem was addressed to the O'Byrnes of Clann Raghnaill on the eve of the battle of Glenmalure, in which Fiacha MacHugh O'Byrne, at the head of the Irish of Leinster, routed the English under Lord Grey de Wilton, Viceroy. Seldom has so valiant a prince found so worthy a laureate as Fiacha MacHugh O'Byrne in Angus

I'd give a kiss to the young girl that
would give her youth to me,
And behind the liss would lie embracing
my Little Dark Rose !

The Erne shall rise in rude torrents, hills
shall be rent,
The sea shall roll in red waves, and blood
be poured out,
Every mountain glen in Ireland, and the
bogs shall quake
Some day ere shall perish my Little Dark
Rose !

MacDaighre O'Daly. Some of the quatrains have been set to the gallant tramping music of "Billy Byrne of Ballymanus."

"The Little Dark Rose" is the original of Mangan's "Dark Rosaleen." The Irish poem (which is not to be judged by my English prose rendering) is a finer poem than Mangan's, having more of the wine of poetry and less of the froth of rhetoric. Its passionate love phrases are of course allegorical. The song is traditionally associated with Red Hugh O'Donnell, who speaks therein as the lover of the mystical Rose, but in the form in which it has been preserved it is later than 1602. Hardiman published it with an English metrical version by Thomas Furlong.

maibhna Oilibéir Shár

seagán mac báiteir breathnaíḡ cct. (1604)

Tá ceo dubac ar ḡac rliab,
 Ceo nac ṽtáinig roimhe riam;
 Tá ciúinear duairc ann um nóin
 Acet amáin trom-ḡuēt an bhróin.

Tá cling na maib leir an nḡaoit,
 Monuar, ir teaceta bhróin dúinn í!
 Tá an ríac dub le ḡlór ḡarḡ
 As fósraḡ uaire an duine máirḡ.

An duir, a uarail óis mo éroide,
 Do rḡnead ḡo dubac an bean ríde?
 I meoḡan ciúin-uaisneac oirde
 Ir cumac do bí rí as éascaoinead.

O'fneagair i ḡac múr ir balla
 ḡo dubac duairc le mac alla;
 Níor ḡlaoir coileac mar ba ḡnát,
 'S níor fósair dúinn am ná trát.

THE DIRGE OF OLIVER GRACE

BY SEAGHAN MAC WALTER WALSH (1604)

A dusky mist is on every hill,
 A mist that hath never come before ;
 There is a mournful silence in the noontide
 Broken by the heavy voice of sorrow.

The death knell sounds upon the wind,
 To us, alas, a messenger of grief !
 The black raven with hoarse note
 Proclaims the hour of the dead.

Is it for thee, young noble one of my heart,
 The *bean sidhe* hath sorrowfully wailed ?
 In the lonely quiet midnight
 Full pitifully she lamented.

Every wall and rampart answered her
 Mournfully, sadly, with its echo ;
 The cock hath not crowed according to his
 wont,
 Nor proclaimed to us time or season.

uē, a 'liréir óis mo éiríde,
ir é do bád atá rí 'éadúeas,
ir é do-béir an lá 'na oirde,
ir é do-béir an éiríde ar éadúeas.

níl aghann anoir, mo bhrón!
i n-áit an t-áit aet eadúeas ir éiríde,
Síleas éiríde ir gól ir eadúeas
féarfa éiríde ir bhréas éiríde.

uē, a bád, do leas tú éiríde
bláit 'r ríeir an n-éiríde ir éiríde,
Monuair, níor fáir an de bád
San ceap ar n-éiríde 'óil ran uair.

i r-éiríde lann ba teann a lán,
as coraint ceir a gáil 'r a bád,
fá éiríde a áit uair féin
ir Uiríde do fúir clú i gáil.

ní bíod baile na Cúirte ar don éiríde
fá éiríde bhrón n-áit' féiríde 'éirídeas,
a féiríde éiríde 'r a éiríde céirfa
Téir bád an óis-fir ba mór i t-éiríde

Alas, young Oliver of my heart,
'Tis thy death that she keeneth ;
'Tis it that turneth day to night,
'Tis it that bringeth sorrow to men.

Now, my grief ! we have nought
In the place of the good man but weeping
and tears,
Shedding of tears, and crying, and weeping,
Is our portion henceforth, and break of heart.

Alas, O death, thou hast struck down forever
The blossom and beauty of our highest
branch,—
My grief, no victory would satisfy death
But the going to the grave of our people's
leader.

In clash of swords his hand was stout
To guard the right of his kin and kith,
Under the banner of his own noble father
And Ormond's banner that found fame afar.

Baile na Cúirte was not wont to be
Under cloud of sorrow that could not be
lifted,
Its faithful lord with his heart in anguish
For the young man's death that was gracious
in accomplishments.

Οιξρε ceapic a ainme, a ghradam 'r a méime,
I'p oighe a rtaíte in gac aipio o'Éirinn,
Mar éirann na bairne ba mairlead a féadain,
Do gheall go leatfao go leatán a géagá.

Ní mar ro do bí i n'óán do'n tréimh-ḡear
Aéct uul ran uais go huaisgnead 'na donar,
Ué! i'p cnead fáda é le n-a ló,
I'p b'íon cpoitbe dá céile go veoiró.

I'p máctair í i'p t'iom fá éimhaid
Ar n'oul go luat dá céile i n-úir,
Aéctair a clainne 'r a céad ghráó,
Ué! i'p í do fudair a c'ráó.

Ní leantair ré an fíad go veoiró
Fá gleannntaid uubá ná rleibitib ceoiró,
Ní éluinḡear a aóaric go binn as réirvead
Ná guct a gádar ar beinn an trléibe.

Ní feicḡear é ar luait-eac óg
Tar claidbe i'p fál as véanarh ríóio,
Tá claoólóó ar a mairne go veoiró,
Ar a móiróáct do éuit t'iom-éeo.

His name's true heir, its pride and ornament,
Heir of his house in every airt of Ireland,
Like the oaken tree comely to be seen
He promised to fling far his branches.

Yet that was not in destiny for the kindly
man,
But to go to the grave alone, all lonesome,
Alas, 'tis a long woe in his day
And a heart's grief to his spouse forever.

She is a mother heavy in affliction
Whose mate hath gone full early into the
clay,
Her children's father, her first beloved,
Alas, 'tis she hath tasted sorrow !

Never again will he follow the deer
In dusky glens or on misty hills,
His horn will not be heard sweetly blowing
Or the voice of his hounds on the mountain
ben.

He will not be seen on a swift young horse
Clearing a road over fosse and fence,—
His comeliness is forever changed,
On his majesty hath fallen a mist.

Δ λάν θροννταό ζο πανν 'να λυίε,
Δ έποιόε μεσημναό μαρò ζαν θρίζ,
Σιολ να ζευπαò αζυρ εαρα να μβάρο,
Σεαρε να ζεεολπαò έαναρ ζο ήάρο.

Σολυρ αν 'όάιν νί πρίάινν 'οο' έλύ,
Αέτ κοήρέιτρò ζο ήάρο μο έυήαιò,
Αζ πλεαò 'όύινν 'οεορ πά 'όειρεαò ζαό λαοι
Αρ έυαμβα αν έυραιò 'οο έράò μο έποιόε.

His gift-giving hand lieth still,
His gallant heart is dead and lifeless,—
Seed of soldiers, friend of poets,
Love of the loud-chanting music-makers !

The light of poesy thy fame needeth not,
Yet it will emblazon on high my grief,
As I shed tears at each day's end
On the soldier's tomb for whom my heart
is heavy.

This dirge for an Irish soldier may well find a place here, although it does not quite come within the scope indicated by the title "Dánta Gríosúighthe Gaedheal." Oliver Grace, heir of the old baronial house of Courtstown (*báile na cúirte*), County Kilkenny, died in 1604. Seaghán Mac Walter Walsh was son of Walter Walsh who was chief of his clan, "Walsh of the Mountains." In 1831 Hardiman (who published the poem) made an appeal for the collection of Walsh's poems up to then preserved on the lips of the people of the Walsh mountains ; but Irish has ebbed from the Walsh mountains and Seaghán Mac Walter's poems are doubtless lost. The dirge has the simplicity and the sincerity which so many later dirges want.

VI

Ceathramha Shíoruisíte

I

Do éireasdaí an riosal ir do féir an gaoth mar
 rmál
 Aiartram, Caerai, 'r an méir do bí 'na bpaíre,
 Tá an Teamhair 'na féar, ir féad an Traoi mar tá,—
 'S na Sapanais féin do b'féoir go bfuigtoir báp!

2

(Gaedeal duibhairt ar breicrin do Sapanais ar
 n-a éiréad ar éirinn)

Mair do toiré, a éirinn!
 Ráe do toiré ar gac don éiré:
 Trais gan éirinnne inre fáil
 Lán deo' toiré gac don lá!

3

Fúbún fúb, a fuaig Gaideal,
 Ní mair doinnead aigé:
 Gail a g comhoinn bui gcríce,—
 Re fuaig ríde bui ramail!

Just as in early Irish manuscripts, Irish love of nature or of nature's God so frequently bursts out in fugitive quatrains of great beauty, so in the seventeenth and eighteenth century manuscripts we find Irish hate of the

VI

SOME REBEL QUATRAINS

I

The world hath conquered, the wind hath
scattered like dust
Alexander, Caesar, and all that shared their
sway,
Tara is grass, and behold how Troy lieth low,
And even the English, perchance their hour
will come !

2

*(A dispossessed Gael sees an Englishman
hanging upon a tree)*

Good is thy fruit, O tree !
The luck of thy fruit on every bough ;
Would that the trees of Innisfail
Were full of thy fruit every day !

3

A shame upon you, host of the Gael,
Among you there is none that liveth :
The Galls are dividing your lands,—
A phantom host is your symbol !

English (a scarcely less holy passion) expressing itself suddenly and splendidly in many a stray stanza jotted down on a margin or embedded in a long and worthless poem. I give three specimens.

VII

Óm' sgeol ar áro-maig fáil

(as éagsaoinaó an-foirlann Éireann)

seatrún céitinn cct. (o'éir 1607)

Óm' rgeol ar áro-maig fáil ní cochlaim
oíóce

'S do bheoó go bhráé mé dála a pobail
oíúir;

Sió ró-faóa atáio 'na bhráé re bhoréar
bíóóbaó,

fá deoioó gur fáir a lán de'n cógal
tríoóca.

A fíóola pláir, ir náir naó follur
daioó-re

Gur córa tal ar ráir-ríoóce mógal
míleao;

Deor níor fágbao i sclár do bholleag
mín-gil

Ilár deoírdo ál gao crána coiscrióce.

VII

FROM MY GRIEF ON FÁL'S
PROUD PLAIN

(Lamenting the oppression of Ireland)

BY GEOFFREY KEATING (*after 1607*)

From my grief on Fál's proud plain I sleep
no night,
And till doom the plight of her native folk
hath crushed me :
Tho' long they stand a fence against a
rabble of foes,
At last there hath grown full much of the
wild tare through them.

Ah, faithless Fódla, 'tis shame that thou
see'st not clearly
That 'twere meeter to give thy milk to the
clustering clan of Míleadh,—
No drop hath been left in the expanse of
thy smooth white breast
That the litter of every foreign sow hath
not sucked !

Ḥac tpeov ḡan tārṣ tar rál vār
toḡair ríneað
Ḥo hóir-rluoct álunn árrarð Còvtaig
Caoil-mbreag,
Ir leo ḡan ḡrárḡar lám ar noona-
briðne,
Ḥac fòv ir fearr vār n-áitib eoðar-
aoibne.

Atáiv fóinne ag fár ran clár ro
loḡa líomta,
Vār cóir beit clát ḡið árv a polla
ag rḡaoileað;
Síol eoḡain ḡan árv 'r an Tál-fuil
boðar-claóirte,
'S na hóig ó'n mbán-terrat rḡáinte i
ḡcoigcrlíoðab,

Na cóirig tairṣ ó'n nár ḡan boḡað
bríg-nirt
I nḡleo ḡér ḡáibteað lá na lonna-
briðne,
Fá frróin an rtaic ba ḡnát a ḡcoḡað
i noíormab;
Ní vóib ba nár aet cáe ḡan comall
vlighe ar bit.

Every common crew that hath chosen to
 come across the sea
To the olden golden comely race of
 Cobhthach Caol mBreagh,
Theirs without challenge of battle are our
 stricken palaces,
Every field most fruitful of our pleasant-
 bordered places.

There are many waxing strong in this plain
 of Lugh the smooth,
Who ought to be weak, though high their
 roll extends ;
Eoghan's seed hath no honour, the Dalcas-
 sian blood dumb-stricken,
And the heroes from Strabane scattered in
 foreign countries.

The famous chiefs of Naas make no manly
 movement,
Though once those fiery bands were fierce
 in fight ;
In the State's despite they waged their war
 in squadrons—
Not theirs the shame, but of those who
 fulfilled not justice.

Ὡά mba beo ápo-ḗlait áine ir Ὀpoma
Ὡaoile

'S na leogain láiope ó'n mág do bponnao
maoine,

Ὡar noóig, níor b'áit do'n táin ro i
n-orḡail Ὡrígve

ḡan ḡeoin ir ḡárta ór ápo oá roḡail-
oíbirt.

Muna b'óirio ceápo na n-ápo-peann
pobal críoc ḡCuirc

Ar f'óirneart námato noána n-ollam
noíogaltao,

Ní mói nár b'feart ḡan áirve a bporḡain-
oíoglam,

'S a reolaó plán i b'án tar tonnaio
Clíoona!

If the high chief lived of Aine and Druim
 Daoile
And the strong lions of Maigne who granted
 gifts,
There surely were no place for this rabble
 where Bride meets Blackwater,
But shouts and outcries on high announcing
 their ruin and rout.

Unless the artisan of the high heavens help
 the folk of Corc's territories
Against the violence of bold, ever-ready,
 vengeful enemies,
'Twere almost better that they were straight-
 way winnowed and gleaned,
And sent safe into exile over the waves of
 Clíodhna!

mo tpuaiḡe maṛ tǎ éire

(Δῆ εἰς αἰὼνα τὸ ὁδοιπορὸν na hÉireann)

seadtrūn céitinn cct. (1644 ?)

mo tpuaiḡe maṛ tǎ éire
 D'éir claochluiḡte a cait-réime,
 Tuḡ rí doibhnear ar upéira
 fá ḡdoiṛ-mear na nḡanar-ra.

Do tuit a ḡleacṛ-rḡéim ḡeirce
 Dá ḡnúir áluinn inneallta,
 Buime áom-ḡoirne áiocta
 Dít ḡac don-oiḡne uiréi.

Ní fear don ḡuairliḡ ḡanba,
 Sḡaoilteac a luēt leanaḡna,
 Tréac ḡeal dá ḡtoḡail ḡan tpeoir
 Ar fearḡ an ḡomáin ḡeirceil.

Áḡḡar túirpe tarla ḡi,
 ḡeic ḡan áomṛac ḡan céile,
 ḡan leannán ina leabairḡ,
 ḡean ḡan teḡḡair ḡac tréin-ḡir.

MY PITY HOW IRELAND STANDETH

(Lamenting the slavery of Ireland)

BY GEOFFREY KEATING (1644 ?)

My pity how Ireland standeth,
Her battle-triumph transformed ;
She hath exchanged happiness for ruin,
Despised by these savages.

Fallen her own winsome beauty
From her lovely shapely face,
Full-breasted nurse of fair hosts,
No heir is left to her !

Unknown now are Banba's nobles,
Scattered are their followers,
A bright band driven without guidance
Throughout the wearisome world !

A woeful thing hath befallen her :
She hath no friend, no mate,
No lover in her bed,—
A woman with no strong man's protection !

San don-*féar* léi-re a*g* l*u*ig*e*
D'fíor-*fuil* o*é*ta a hionm*u*ine,
S*g*éim*h* *glac*-*foillre* *gér* *ó*ual *o*i,
Snuad*h* na ha*é*-*cuirre* uir*é*i.

Do *cuir* *rí* a *rúil* *o*e *é*adair,
Do *é*réis a *plea*é*é* *rearcam*ail
Lú*b* *í*onn-*á*ro-*glan* na n*glac* n*geal*
Iar n-ionn*ar*ba*é* mac *mí*le*ad*h.

Ní *fuil* *rúil* aici *re* haoin-*féar*,
Ar n-im*é*ad*é* d'f*u*il *í*or-*g*aoi*é*al
Tar *rál* *g*on*ra*é*ad* *g*uan n*geal*,
O*ri*é*ad*é uai*é* a haig*ne*ad*h*.

Ní *fuig*é an *é*aint*re*ad*é* *o*os
Leannán ná céile *car*ad
Go *te*ad*é* *í*or-*g*aoi*é*al 'na *g*ar,
Gíor na *raoi*n-*féar* go *ri*ad*ar*.

Ion*é*nú*é* *á*ro-*fla*é *fuinn* *é*an*é*
Tug *ne*ar*é* d*o*'n *féinn* a*llm*ar*é*,
T*re*ad*h* *raob*ra*é* d*o* b'*á*ir*é* d'f*ea*é
Ar *é*aoim*é*ad*h* ma*icne* *mí*le*ad*h.

No man lieth beside her
Of the true blood of her heart's affection,—
And tho' bright beauty was her birthright,
The hue of sorrow is on her.

She hath turned her hope from help,
Her loving children have forsaken
The fair, tall, white-palmed woman,—
For the sons of Míleadh are banished.

She hath no hope of any husband,
For the true Gaelic blood is gone
Over the stormy white-bayed sea—
For this her mind is heavy.

The gentle widow shall not find
A lover or a friendly mate
Until the true Gaels come again,—
With freemen's shouts inspiring dread.

The mutual jealousy of the chiefs of
Banba
Hath given power to the foreign soldiery,
The keen band most mature in growth,
Over the friend of the sons of Míleadh.

Éiscearc na hÉireannaó féin
Do tsearḡair id do don-béim,
As rparinn fá ceart ḡairi corraó,
Ní neart air na n-eactronnaó.

Ní hionḡnaó o'mir na neart
Beit beireoil o'ér a hannraó,
O'fine ḡaorbeal na nḡnóim náir,
ḡaó doin-ḡear oíob ḡan oíogbáil.

An flaitear fuaḡaḡar rin
Ar mir oirbeirc Ébir,
Tḡeao ionn ler fuaó a hannra,
Ní fuair oḡonḡ de'n doḡan-ra.

Cia an cḡoibe náir élaóclaid rin
De maicne ḡlórimáir ḡaoróil,
A n-arḡain ḡan coingleic ḡceall,
Áro-fuil oirbeirc na hÉireann?

Buime an atḡuim, ḡiú í rin,
'Na oílleaó o'ér ḡaó doin-ḡir,
A muiḡe, ir tḡuaḡ mar tḡarla,
ḡan tḡnaó n-uile n-atḡaró.

'Tis the wrong-doing of the Irish themselves
That have overthrown them with one
stroke,
Quarrelling about some fleeting transient
right,—
And not the strength of the enemy's arms.

No wonder that the isle of strengths,
Once beloved, should now repine
For the Gaelic race of noble deeds,
Who once cherished her full well.

The rule that they attained
Over the illustrious isle of Eibhear,
The fiery tribe that hated her love,
No other race in the world hath attained.

Where is the heart that it hath not sickened
Of the glorious sons of the Gael,
To see the plundering of unresisting churches
By the high illustrious blood of Ireland ?

The nurse of the fosterling though she be,
Widowed of every husband,
O Mary, how pitiful her fate,
Bereft of all her ancestral beauty !

Ξαν ὄϊον ἀπ' οἴο na hinnre,
 Τρυσὸς ἐσσεύετο na hinnill-re,
 Δίεμε a realbuisgte map rean,
 Sean-mátaip maicne míleao.

Ο'ράσαιθ' ριύο ire Ξαν τρεοip,
 Ιαίρμα a cloinne 'r a cineoil,
 Ξέ τάρο ριאו caointeac τὰ Ξcailg,
 Ξgaointeac iao ann Ξac don-áip.

Μειρορεac Ξαν iocet, Ξαν onóip,
 An épíoc ro púipet pártalóin,
 Το épíon a ciall Ξan cómta,
 'S a píot pá úpúing noanapóa!

.

These very difficult poems of Keating have a power and a distinction in the original which it is impossible to transfuse into English. In fact, in my rough prose versions they cease to be poetry, and those who know English only will not understand my motive in including them. Some passages of my translation are merely tentative, especially in the second poem, the text of which is probably corrupt. Keating's poems were first collected and edited by the Rev. J. C. MacErlean, S.J. (for the Gaelic League), and were published in 1900. I am not aware of any published translations of either of the poems here reprinted. Father MacErlean has

Without protection against the island's evil,
Alas, the deformity of her condition,
Those who possessed her thus,—
The ancient mother of the sons of Míleadh.

That it is that hath left her bewildered,—
The remnant of her children and her race,
Altho' they are mournful, goaded as they are,
They are dispersed in every airt.

A harlot without respect or honour
Is this land of Partholon's stronghold,—
Her reason hath withered without reward,
And her seed is subject to savages !

.

kindly read through my versions, and I have gratefully adopted some of his suggestions. He would paraphrase stanza 15 of No. VIII. thus :—"Sadly is the state of the ancient mother of the sons of Míleadh, her former loyal possessors, deformed through their leaving her unprotected against the evils that encompass her."

The Flight of the Earls seems to be alluded to in line 16 of No. VII. The date 1644 is apparently indicated in the final quatrain of No. VIII., which quatrain, however, I omit, as it is pure prose and provides an anticlimax to the passion and bitterness of the preceding quatrain.

IX

mo ðeannaðt leat, a Sýsbinn

seðtrún céitunn cct. (*circ.* 1606)

Mo ðeannaðt leat, a sýsbinn,
 So hinir doibinn ealga!
 'S truað náð léir þaðn a beanna,
 Sjó snáð a ðeanna ðearga!

Slán vð huairle ír vð hoireaðt,
 Slán so poi-ðeaðt vð cléirðib,
 Slán vð bantpraðtaib caoine,
 Slán vð þaorðib þe héisgre!

Mo þlán vð maðgaib míne,
 Slán þá míle vð cnocaib,
 Moðean ðo'n tí tð innri,
 Slán vð linnrið 'r vð loðaðib!

Slán vð coillrið þá ðorðaðib,
 Slán þór vð corðaðib iargðais,
 Slán vð móinnrið 'r vð bannraib,
 Slán vð þaðaðib 'r vð þuargðaðib!

IX

MY BLESSING WITH THEE, WRITING

BY GEOFFREY KEATING (*circ.* 1606)

My blessing with thee, writing,
To the delightful isle of Erin !
Alas, that I see not her hill-tops,
Tho' frequent blaze their beacons !

Farewell to her princes and people,
A fond farewell to her clerics,
Farewell to her gentle women,
Farewell to her learned in letters !

Farewell to her level plains,
A thousand farewells to her hills,
All hail to him that dwelleth there,
Farewell to her pools and lakes !

Farewell to her fruit-bearing forests,
Farewell to her fishing weirs,
Farewell to her bogs and leas,
Farewell to her raths and moors !

Slán óm' éiríde dá cuantaibh,
Slán fós dá tuairteibh tróma,
Sopairé dá tulcáibh donais,
Slán uaim dá cnaobáibh croma.

Sió gnát a fóinne fíaoctha
I n-inis naomhta neamhoct,
Siar tar thomclaó na díleann
Deir, a ríribinn, mo deannaóct!

Farewell from my heart to her harbours,
Farewell to her heavy pastures,
Adieu to her hillocks of hosting,
Farewell to her bending branches !

Though battle-wrath be frequent
In the holy heaven-favoured isle,
Westward o'er ocean's ridge,
Take, O writing, my blessing.

CAOIN TÚ FÉIN, A ÒINE BHOICÉ

SEATRÚN CÉITINN cct. (circ. 1640)

CAOIN TÚ FÉIN, A ÒINE BHOICÉ,
 Oe éaoineadh éad coirge do fáil;
 Ná caoin inígean, ná caoin mac
 Dár cuireadh fá bhrat i n-úir.

CAOIN AR DÚR DO PEACAD FÉIN
 Ré noul inr an scré doo' éorp;
 CAOIN, ÓR ÉIGEAN DUIT A HÍOC,
 An páir fuair Cníort ar do fon.

CAOIN AR FUILING AR DO RIGÉ
 Cníort, do éannuis cáe i scríann,
 CAOIN A DÁ LÁIM 'R A DÁ COIR,
 Ir a éiríde do ríocht an dall.

RACAD CAC UILE FÁ REAC:
 Ná caoin neac dá racad uait,
 Seac ar leasadh nam i scré,
 Doilge duit tú féin, a éruais.

KEEN THYSELF, POOR WIGHT

BY GEOFFREY KEATING (*circ.* 1640)

Keen thyself, poor wight :
 From weeping others restrain thine eyes ;
 Keen not daughter, keen not son
 That hath been shrouded in clay.

Keen first thine own sin
 Ere thy body goeth into dust ;
 Keen, since thou must pay for it,
 The passion Christ suffered for thy sake.

Keen the sufferings on thy behalf
 Of Christ, Who redeemed all upon a tree,
 Keen His two hands and His two feet,
 And His heart which the blind man clave.

Every single one shall go :
 Yet keen none that shall pass from thee,—
 Beyond all that have ever been laid in earth,
 Thine own case, poor wretch, toucheth thee
 most nearly.

Ar éruiteig lám dear an tsaoir
 toir mada, mnaoi, ir fir,
Ní fuil aghainn truaig ná tréan
 nac raicair uainn o'éas mar rin.

Dá bfaicfeá a nveacair uait,
 mar atáir na rluais ro fúinn,
Tar a nveacair riam i gcé,
 Do éaoirfeá tú féin ar otúir.

Ar rleib Síoin, lá na rluais,
 buó buibe 'ná sual do ghe,
Anoir gíó áluinn do érué,
 Muna scaoinir 'bpuir tú féin.

Teactaire Dé ó'r é an bár,
 Dá raib ort-ra 'na éar éruair,
Do-ghénaó tú é' aimleap féin,
 Ir aimleap an té do éuair.

Truaig rin, a boctáin gan céill,
 Dá otuigfeá tú féin mar taoi,
Do léigfeá de éaoineáó éaic,
 'S do beiteá go bpaé ag caoi.

Of all that the Creator's right hand hath
 made,
Of boys, of women, and of men,
There is none, weak or mighty,
But shall pass unto his death.

Couldst thou see all that have gone from
 thee,
As these hosts beneath us are,
Before all that have ever gone into earth,
Thou wouldst keen thyself first.

On Sion hill, on the day of the hosts,
Thy face shall be blacker than a coal,
Though fair thy aspect now,—
Unless thou keen thyself while here.

Since death is the messenger of God,
Shouldst thou repine at his doings,
Thou wouldst achieve thine own misfortune
And the misfortune of him that hath gone.

Alas, poor witless wight,
Didst thou understand thyself as thou art,
Thou wouldst cease to keen for others
And yet wouldst be weeping forever !

XI

Δ ὕμνος ἑὶς τοῦ Σπουδαίου

σεατρῦν κείτῳν cct. (circ. 1642)

Δ ὕμνος ἑὶς τοῦ σπουδαίου,
 Congbuis uaim do lánh:
 Ní fear gníomha rinn,
 Sé tair tinn dá ngnáth.

Féad ar liat dem' folc!
 Féad mo corp san lút!
 Féad ar t'rao' dem' fuil!
 Creao ne a bfuil do t'nút?

Ná ríl mé so raob,
 A-rír ná claoon ceann,
 Bíod ar ngnáth san gníomh,
 So brát, a ríod reang.

Ómuo do béal óm' béal,
 Ouilge an rseal do corp.
 Ná bíom cneap ne cneap,
 Tis ó'n tear an tol.

O WOMAN FULL OF WILE

BY GEOFFREY KEATING (*circ.* 1642)

O woman full of wile,
Keep from me thy hand :
I am not a man of the flesh,
Tho' thou be sick for my love.

See how my hair is grey !
See how my body is powerless !
See how my blood hath ebbed !
For what is thy desire ?

Do not think me besotted :
Bend not again thy head,
Let our love be without act
Forever, O slender witch.

Take thy mouth from my mouth,
Graver the matter so ;
Let us not be skin to skin :
From heat cometh will.

Do éúí cpaobac cap,
Do popt glap map ópúct,
Do éúó épuinn geal bláit,
Tappaingear mian púl.

Šac šníom áct šníom cuip,
Ip luiše io' éuitc puain,
Do-šéanainn oot' špáó,
A bean lán de ptuain!

'Tis thy curling ringleted hair,
Thy grey eye bright as dew,
Thy lovely round white breast,
That draw the desire of eyes.

Every deed but the deed of the flesh
And to lie in thy bed of sleep
Would I do for thy love,
O woman full of wile !

These three poems do not at all come within the scope suggested by the title "Dánta Shíoruaighe Saeóeal," but it is necessary to include them in order to give an adequate representation of the powerful and versatile genius of Keating. "My Blessing with Thee, Writing," was written while Keating was in France (1603-10). "Keen Thyself, Poor Wight," is also attributed to Donough Mór O'Daly and to Angus O'Daly Fionn, but is commonly accepted as Keating's. It is said to have been written in reply to a poem of David Dubh Fitzgerald's on the death of his only son. O'Curry thought that "O Woman Full of Wile" could not be Keating's (although ascribed to him by all the MSS.) because it "contains no reference to his clerical character," but it is plainly just a dramatic lyric, and in no sense autobiographical. To say that a priest could not write such a poem would be to say that a priest could not be an artist.

XII

An Síogairde Rómánach

FEAR SAN AINM CCT. (1650)

I—ÉAGCAOINEAD

Innrim pior ir ní pior bréige,
Le ar rúilib dúinne ba léar é,
Le mo cluaraib cualar féin é,
An ní aoirim ní ceirim ar don cor.

Lá dá mabhar ar maidin im' donar,
Ir an Róim ar ór-énoc Céardair,
Sínce ar leic ag rileaó déara,
Lán de ghrúaim ar uais na nSaeóeal-fear;

Fá raib diair doob' fial fá féadaib,
Le n-ar ghráómar áobair m'éaghaig,
Iarla móir tíre Eoḡain Néill-muir,
Ir Ó Domnaill na n-ór-lann bpaóbrach.

THE ROMAN VISION

ANONYMOUS (1650)

I—LAMENTATION

I tell a tale and no lying tale,
 With mine own eyes it was clear to me,
 With mine own ears I myself heard it,
 The thing I speak I speak aloud.

One morning that I was alone
 In Rome upon the golden hill of Cephaz,
 Stretched upon a flagstone shedding tears,
 Full of grief upon the grave of the Gaels,

Under which were two once generous in
 gift-giving,
 To whom had been dear the cause that I
 lamented,
 The mighty Earl of Tyrone of Niall's
 race
 And O'Donnell of the keen-edged golden
 blades.

An tráct do fáoiléar ríct do déanamh,
Cia do éirínn de máoilinn an trléibe,
Aéct maisdean áluinn bhrághair-geal péarlac
Do bain bárr go bráct de bhenur

Ir de mmeirbá i nbeilb 'r i ndeanamh:
Ir maic do rníomáó a bmaoíte caola,
Do bí an t-óir i meadóin a céibe,
'S do bí an rneacta 'r an lafair na héadan.

Áthbairt rí liom ran mball gcéadna
De glór milir ba binne 'nā téada
Óruioim ruar ó uais na ttréan-fer,—
Ba rada as caoi 'r a crioide dá néadaó.

Rá deiréad éiar i nioiaó a raoóair,
Do tós rí uail ba truaḡ le héirteact
Do bainfead deoir go leor ar cléiréib,
Aḡur ornaó ar na cloóair dá mb'féirir.

Leir an maoidéad rin do rín rí a ḡéada,
'S as deiréad ruar go cruaid ar néallair,
Do labair rí le Ríḡ na Spéire,
Lán de éannclair inra réim ro:

And when I thought to rest me there,
Behold, I saw from the hill's bare side
A maid most lovely, with throat of pearly-
white,
Ah, lovelier far than Venus' self,

Or than Minerva in form and shape :
Most daintily fashioned were her delicate
limbs,
Gold burned in the depth of her hair,
And there shone a flame through the snow
of her cheek.

And on that spot she spake and bade me,
With sweet voice more melodious than
strings,
To rise up from the heroes' grave—
Then long she wept as with heart in anguish.

At length, after all her sad ado,
She raised a lament most pitiful to hear,
That would make even hard clerics weep—
Yea, wring a sigh from the stones, if possible.

And with that outcry she stretched her hands,
And looking sternly up to the heavens,
She spake to the King of the Firmament,
Full of reproach, in these words :

Δ' ὅε μοῖρ, ἀν' ὅσιν ὑβ' μ' εἵρτεαδ',
 ἢ ὅ ἀν' ἡμῖτε κεῖτε βεῖς εἴσιν
 ὅο ἐυαῖο ἰ πρῶταγεαν ἀρ' ἡμῶν βεῖσιν
 ὅ' φησὶν γε οἷβ, ὅ' τ' οἷβ ἱρ' ἑῶν ἱ?

Ó táim ar meabhall i n-ainbrior rḡeala,
 Óir m'áir ionann do tuill ḡac don neac
 Coir na rinnreap do rinne an céad-ḡear,
 Ádair ar n-ádhair do meallad le héad,

Ορέστω πα' ντοιοιταρι πλαν να πέινε
 Αρι δον πόρι νιορ μό' νά α' θέιτε?
 Ορέστω πα' ραοριταρι ζα' δ' ο' αορι είςσεαριτ,
 Ιρ να' δ' mbionn ραορι να' δ' ντοαοριταρι ε' ρεαλ?

[illegible]

Créad nác breanntar clann lúteair,
'S clann Éiríort dá sclaoiribh go n-éadair?
Créad nác truaig na huain dá scréadair
'S na mic tíre as inéirim' an tréadair?

“Mighty God, wilt Thou deign to hear me,
And may I ask Thee one little question
That hath baffled all the sons of learning—
May I ask Thee, for to Thee 'tis clear?

“Since I am at fault, without knowledge of
the subject,
If everyone must equally expiate
Original sin which the first man committed,
Adam our father, deceived by Eve,

“Why, then, is the penalty exacted
From one race more than another?
Why is every unjust churl made free,
And every freeman made a slave?

“Why are the poor crucified though crime-
less,
While the tribe of sinners enjoyeth the
world's goods?
Why are not heretics extirpated
Tho' stubbornly they hunt down true
believers?

“Why is not Clann Luther flayed,
While Christ's clan is persecuted unto death?
Why no pity for the lambs that are torn,
While the wolves harry the flock?

Créad an ceart fá leagtar Éire
'S le n-a gleoibh nac móir go n-éirítear?
Créad an dóir nac tógtar Saeóeala,
Dreanm nár díolt do'n Dúileam géillead?

.

II—TAINNHIRÉ

Ní b'iair ceangal le Sacraibh ar don neac,
Ní b'iair cairdeam le hAlban'caibh maola,
Ní b'iair marctainn ar eac'trainn i nÉirinn,
'S ní b'iair ceao coimisce ar t'eangain an
D'éarla.

B'iair an buaibh ag rluas na nSaeóeal-fear
Ar élaínn Cailbín éleapais b'iair b'iair,
B'iair a n-uairle i n-uac'tar ar éiríobh
Ir gáir fá toll i n'iair élaínn' lúteapuir.

B'iair a gceirdeam gan m'illead gan t'rao'ad,
B'iair an eadair ag t'easair a t'rao'ad,
B'iair, eapuir, r'asair, 'r cléiríobh,—
'S b'iair r'it go t'eoir 'na t'eoir ag Éirinn.

Suirim-pe Dia, má'r mian leir m'éirtead,
Suirim f'ora do-éir an méir go,
'S an Spiorad Naomh'ta arís t'adon-toil,
Muiré m'atair ir páirais t'eir-g'eal,

“ With what justice is Ireland overthrown,
And her cry scarcely listened to?
Why are not the Gaels exalted,
A race that never denied homage to the
Creator?”

.

II—PROPHECY

“ No man shall be bound unto England
Nor hold friendship with dour Scotsmen ;
There shall be no place in Ireland for
outlanders,
And no recognition for the English speech.

“ Victory shall be to the host of the Gael
Over Calvin’s clan—the trickster, the thief,
the liar ;
Their nobles shall triumph over heretics,
And shout at the routing of Clan Luther.

“ Their faith shall not fall nor ebb,
The Church shall teach her flocks,
Friars, bishops, priests, and clerics—
And ever after Ireland shall have peace.

“ I pray God, if He deign to hear me,
I pray Jesus Who seeth all this,
And the Holy Ghost again with one will,
Mother Mary and Patrick White-Tooth,

Colum cpoirde agur bpiáio naomta,
 So noaingniúe riao Gaedil dá céile,
 'S so otiúio úioib an gnióm ro 'déanadh:
 Gaill do úibire ir cpioc Banba 'raoraib!

An trát cpiocnuis an tpió-bean péacaó.
 Mar adubhar ar otúr an méio ro,
 Iar mbualao a bar so ppar pá céile
 Do éuaib pí ruar de ruais so néalluib;

Agur o'pás pí mire ar leic im' donar,
 Sínte ar tuama-uais na nGaedeal-pear,
 San rppacaó san slór san tpeoir san don
 éor,
 Lán de bpón tré rgeon a rgealta.

• • • • •

These are two extracts from "The Roman Vision," written in 1650 by an unknown poet. In the entire poem there are eighty quatrains and a ceangal. The poet imagines himself upon the graves of the Irish princes (Hugh O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell) in Rome. The spirit of Ireland manifests herself to him, and in impassioned language recalls the heroic struggle of the Irish for freedom and its disastrous issue, under Tudors, Stuarts, and Cromwellians. She dwells lovingly on the figures

“ Kindly Colum and Holy Brigid,
That they may weld the Gael together,
And that thus they may compass this deed :
The banishment of the Gall and the freeing
of Ireland.”

When the queenly apparition had made an
end,
As I said at the beginning, of these words,
Quickly she struck her two palms together,
And with an upward sweep disappeared in
the clouds ;

And she left me on a flagstone alone,
Stretched upon the tomb of the Gaels,
Lifeless, mute, dazed, motionless,
Full of grief from the terror of her tale.

.

of Owen Roe O'Neill and the soldier bishop Heber MacMahon. Finally, she promises victory if the Irish only hold together. The savage hatred expressed for the English and for the Protestant sectaries will be understood when it is remembered that the poem was written within a year after Drogheda and Wexford, and that it was intended as a stimulus to the Irish in their stubborn stand against the Cromwellian generals.

XIII

ΔΙ ΕΟΪΔΗ ΡΥΑΘ' Ο ΝΕΙΛΛ

ΠΑΡΑΣ ΠΕΙΡΙΤΕΙΡ C.C.T. (*circ.* 1641)

ΜΑ'Ρ Ε ΑΝ ΛΕΟΜΑΝ ΕΡΩΘΑ ΣΑΕΘΕΑΙ Ι ΣΧΕΑΡΤ
ΟΟ ΒΕΑΡΑΡ ΡΟΘ ΓΛΑΝ ΡΟΤΛΑ ΡΕ Ν-Α ΡΜΑΟΤ,
Ι ΘΡΑΙΣΕ-ΡΙ, Α ΡΤΟΘΑΙΣ ΕΡΩΙΝ, ΝΟΘ ΤΕΙΟ ΤΑΡ ΛΕΑΡ,
ΒΕΙΡ ΕΥΜ ΕΟΪΔΗΝ ΜΟΙΡ ΨΙ ΝΕΙΛΛ ΑΝ ΓΛΑΘ.

XIII

ON OWEN ROE O'NEILL

BY PIERCE FERRITER (*circ.* 1641)

If he be truly the valiant lion of the Gael
That shall bring Fódla's fair sod under his
 sway,
In this scrap of paper, O yellow ship's mast
 that sailest the sea,
Bear to great Owen O'Neill the leadership !

Ἐο-ἔυαλα σῆéal ὁο ἑέαρ ἀρ λό μέ

πιαρας περιτέιρ cct. (circ. 1652)

Ἐο-ἔυαλα ρῆéal ὁο ἑέαρ ἀρ λό μέ,
 ἱρ τυῖ ραν οἰῶδε ἰ πῶδοιρρε ὑπόιν μέ,
 Ὅ'φάῖ μο ἑρεατ ῆαν νεαρτ μνά ρεολτα.
 ῆαν ὑρίῖ, ῆαν μέαῶαιρ, ῆαν ῖρεανν, ῆαν
 ρόῖναμ.

Δῶῶαρ μαοιτε ρῆαοιλεαῶ ἀν ρῆεοιλ ριν,
 Ἐάρ ῆαν leiῖεαρ ἱρ ἀῶναῶ τῶιρρε,
 Δῑ-νουαῶαῶ λuit ἱρ uile ἱρ eolῑαιρ,
 ῆρῑορῑῖαῶ ταοῶμα ἱρ τρειῖῶε μῶιρρε.

Ὅιοῑῖαῶ buiῶne cpiῑce ρῑῶla,
 λῑῖῑαῶ ῆρῑnn ἱρ ῆηαοι na cῑῖῑe,
 μαρ ὁο Ὅιοῖαῶ ἀρ πῶδοιρρε μῑῑα
 ἀρ α ὑρεαρῑῑῑαῑῶ cαιρτε ἱρ cῑῑα.

ON THE CROMWELLIAN
CLEARANCESBY PIERCE FERRITER (*circ.* 1652)

A tale I've heard that hath tortured me by
day
And in the night in grief hath plunged me,
Left my loins without the strength of a
woman child-delivered,
Left me forceless, mindless, joyless, bereft
of faculty.

A cause of anguish is the publishing of that
tale,
Woe incurable and kindling of sorrow,
Renewal of bloodshed and misery and evil,
An excitation of fever-strife and agonies :

The destruction of the people of the land
of Fódla,
The decline of the joy and happiness of the
countryside,
The rooting-up of our great nobles
From the lands which were theirs by law
and justice.

Mór an rḡéal, ní féidir fólaing
 Ar nóite do ríomh lem' ló-ra,
 Fuair an féile léan 'na deoró rin,
 Is tá an daonnaóct ḡac lae dá leonab.

Ní fuil cluair i n-iaḡaib fóola,
 Ní fuil aiprinn aḡaínn ná órda,
 Ní fuil bairte ar na leanbdaib óḡa,
 ḡan fear fearaim ná caḡarta a ḡóra.

Créad do déanfaó ar n-aor óḡa
 Is ná fuil neac re maidé dá bpróiréint?
 Aḡaio ḡan triat áct Dia na ḡlóire,
 Is a bpríom-ál dá nḡríoraíl tar bócha.

ḡearán m'aignió dearb na rḡeol rin,
 ḡabáil ḡarb na n-eaḡtrann óirinne,
 Maidé 'fíor aḡam an t-aóḡar fá'r óiruibḡ,
 D'aitle ar bpeacaó an t-aḡair do deonuibḡ

.

Do beir neart is ceart is cródaḡt,
 Do beir rmaḡt is reacḡt fá ró-óion,
 Do beir riat ar ar ran bpróḡmar,
 Dá mbeir Dia le triaḡaib fóola.

Great the tale—nay, it were not possible
In a lifetime to recite the wrongs endured:
Generosity hath suffered sorrow for it,
Every day Humanity is wounded.

There are no priests in the fields of Fódla,
No Masses have we nor any orders,
Our little children are unbaptised,
No man to stand for or plead their rights.

What shall our young folk do
Since none there is to give them kindly help?
No lord they have but the God of Glory,
And the flower of their flock are driven
beyond the sea.

My mind lamenteth for the certainty of
those tidings—
The rude conquest of us by the outlanders;
Well do I know why it hath been ordained:
To requite our sins the Father hath willed it.

.

Strength and right and valour would reign,
Order and law would be highly prized,
Rich and abundant would be the corn in
the harvest time
If God were with the chiefs of Fódla.

Óiméig brian na scliair ó'n mbóirne,
Do bí tréimre as éirinn póрта;
Níl murcáð cumarað cróda
I scluain Tairb ba taca le comlann.

San trác fá láirín na treoin rin,
Clann Cárreais ran Tál-ful treorað,
Níor rgaileadar gaoiúil dá bpostrað
Tar tuinn nó gac láirín teorann.

Atáir na Danair i leabair na leomán,
Go rearḡair ráim go ráðail reomrað,
Briogmair biaðmair briaðrað bpoimair,
Comigteac cainnteac rainnteac ríónað.

Ir é rún 'r fonn na fóirne,
Dá méir rít do ghréir ne ar bpoir-ne,
An rponḡ bíor as ríðteac leo agairn,
Súḡrað cluicí an cluicín cróda.

Brian of the bands hath left his Tributes,
He who once was Ireland's mate;
No longer is Murrough the strong, the
 valiant,
In Clontarf, the stay of every fight.

In the day when those stalwart ones were
 mighty—
Clann Carthy and the leader-like Dalcas-
 sians—
The Gael were not being proscribed and
 banished
Beyond the sea and every frontier.

Pirates rule in the place of the princes,
In comfort, in ease, in luxury, in spacious
 palaces,
Full of strength, full of food, full of words,
 well-feasting,
Uncouth, gabbling, greedy, cynical.

The aim and desire of the crew is,
However they may make peace with our
 people,
To play with those of us that accept terms
 from them,
The tricks of the redoubtable cat with
 the mouse!

Ír truaḡ lem' éroíde 'r ír tinn tár
nórlann

Nuaḋar Ċuinn, Ċríomḡain, ír Eoḡain,
Suar ḡaḋ oíḋe aḡ luḡe ne deoraíḡtíḃ
'S ḡan luāḋ ar a cloinn do b' aicí pórtā.

Teaḋ Tuāḡail, monuar, do tóirneāḋ,
Ír epó Ċuinn ḡan cuimne ar nóraitḃ,
Fonn féirḡime ḡo tréit-laḡ tóirneāḋ,
Iaḋ luḡuine ḡo bhríḡte bhrónaḋ.

Aḋaḋ airt fá ḋear ḡan róḡaḋar,
Críoc Ċobḡais fá uḡaim aḡ ríḡiḡtíḃ,
Clár Ċormaic fáíḋ foirtíll na ḡcom-focail,
Fá'n onḋoin lán o'foḡram deoraḋ.

Mo léan, ní hé tréine na ríḡḡ rin,
Nā buirbe na fuirne ó Ųóḃer,
Nā neart naimhe do ḋail ar nḡḋar,
Aḋt ríḡaḡtar Ųé tā ar éirínn róḡ-ḡlair.

.

My heart grieveth, my bowels are compassionate
That the spouse of Conn, of Criomhthan, and
of Owen,

Should lie every night with strangers
And that her own who were mated with her
are no longer commemorated.

The House of Tuathal, alas, hath been over-
thrown,

The Hold of Conn remembereth not its
traditions,

The Land of Féidhlim is weary and worn out,
The Country of Iughuine is crushed and
sorrowful ;

The Field of Art oppressed and joyless,
The Territory of Cobhthach under the yoke
of armies,

The Plain of wise, strong, soothsaying Cormac
Trampled by the leopard, full of tearful
lamentation.

Alas, 'tis not the might of those armies,
Not the fierceness of the crew from Dover,
Not the strength of enemies that hath blasted
our hope,
But God's vengeance upon green-sodded
Ireland !

.

Ciob tã an eang ro teann as tóimac
fã lãim leabair na nSall ro nóð asainn,
ãitim don-mãac tréan na hÓige
So ucigib an Cearc ran aic 'nar cõir òð.

Ir biobgaoð báir liom báir mo comurran,
Na raoite ráma rápta reolta,
I ucir ba gnátað lán oe tóðact
Ite, Vade oá ráð leo-ran.

Ir gan aét cáirde ó ló go ló aca
Oá gcuir uile i tuilleað uóðair
So mbeir fáðar oá fasbail uóib rin
Ir gan ann aét "Till further orders."

Salair gan téarmað ir maotcar mór liom.
Sneamanna uaoir-báir cé tãim glópac,
Sgairpeað ar an bfeinn oár géill clár fótla,
Ir eaglaíir Oé oá claoclóð ar óroaib.

Tã rgeim na gréine go nóna
fã éiclipir ó éirge ló òi,
Tã na rpéarta i ngné oá fósrað
Nã fuil téarma ar raoðail ró-faða.

Altho' this land so strong in bursting into birth
Be under the long arm of these new-come Galls,
I beseech the valiant Son of the Virgin
That Right may come to the place that is
its due.

A death's pang to me is the death of my
neighbours,
The pleasant, gracious, ever-ready gentle folk—
In a land that once was full of abundance
The word for them is *Ite, Vade*.

They have no respite but from day to day
Which filleth them with a new hope
That some grace may be obtained for them :
But 'tis only "*Till further orders*."

A disease that hath no cure, a terrible
unmanning,
The throes of death (altho' still I speak),
Such to me is the scattering of the heroes
whom Fódla honoured,
And God's Church transformed from her
ordinances.

The beauty of the sun till evening
Is eclipsed from the very rise of day,
The aspect of the heavens warneth us
That the term of our life is but short.

Fúair an éairdear rpar a dóctain,
 Le luét réad ní géar an rgeol rin,
 Ní léir dom doinnead ar m'eolar
 Noé do béarad réad cum brós dam.

Fásbaim rin ar éur an Comáctais,
 Don-mac Muire gile móire,
 Ar a bfuil ar n-uile-dócar,
 So bfuigead rib-re ir mire cóctrom.

Ir aicéim Íora, Rí na gLóire,
 Mar ir fíor gur trío rin o'rógnar,
 Saoilire laoi agur oirde o'órouis,
 So oitigib an ní mar íilim dóib rin.

Pierce Ferriter was one of the most gallant figures in the Ireland of his day. Chief of his house, the Ferriters of Ballyferriter, he drew sword for Ireland in 1641, and was the last of the Confederate leaders to hold out against the Cromwellian armies. He co-operated with Finnghin MacCarthy in the capture of Castlemaine (1641), succeeded to the chief command, took Tralee Castle (1642), and maintained himself in Corca Dhuibhne until 1653. In that year, after the fall of Ross Castle, he came, upon invitation of Brigadier Nelson, and under his promise of safe conduct, to Killarney, to discuss terms of peace. He rejected the English terms and set out for home, trusting to Nelson's "safe conduct." But in spite of the "safe conduct" Nelson had him seized at Castlemaine, brought back to Killarney, and hanged.

Friendship hath reigned long enough—
To the wealthy that is welcome tidings :
I know not one in all my acquaintance
Who would give me sixpence to buy
 brogues !

I refer it to the All-Powerful,
To the One Son of great white Mary,
To Whom is all our hope,
That ye and I may get justice.

And I beseech Jesus, King of Glory,
Since it is through Him that I have
 prospered,
Him who hath ordained day and night,
That the thing that I think may happen
 to them !

Ferriter's poems were collected and edited by the Rev. P. S. Dinneen for the Gaelic League in 1903 ; and in the foregoing text I substantially follow Father Dinneen. (For reasons of space I omit six stanzas and the Ceangal of No. XIV.) The quatrain on Owen Roe shows that Ferriter was one of the Irish chiefs who from the outbreak of the war looked to that great soldier, then on the Continent, as Ireland's deliverer. The poem on the Cromwellian Clearances, which reads flatly enough in a literal translation, is in the original thunderous with assonance and liquid with alliteration : it is like a waterfall. Ferriter was a poet of very versatile culture : his love and satirical poems have the grace and deftness of Moore.

Slíocht Duanaire Saeóilge

Slíocht Duanaire Saeóilge annro ríor. Ír faoi dom 'sá cupí roimh binnear sáca ceoil agus uairead sáca rmaointe oár fáis éisre Saeóil i n-a noiaio do bairiugádo le céile agus do éraob-rsaoileado i leabair. Do cupíinn i bpoirceann an leabair úo caibrit i n-a roiomrócainn a roáinís cúgáinn o'fíor-fílióeado le béal-oidear na rean ar n-a canado i n-aillo nó inr na haoirib deirio reo le luot tuaithe. Ír ioncupádo cuio de'n bfiúeado rin le fílióeado na ríis-fíle, oir ír minic féit na fílióeado i bfean an bpoirín.

Má bí fupmóir na n-ahmán agus na noán ro im' oiaio fá cío ceana, ní luáioe ír fíu a scup i scio annro. Ír é an nóir oár leanaí as oéanaí an leabair reo dom .i. nóir na beice meala; oir ír é do-ghí an beac meala sádo plannoa agus sádo roir deas-bládo oá bfuil ran nsaipódo do cuapugádo as tionól

SPECIMENS FROM AN IRISH ANTHOLOGY

The pieces to follow are specimens from the final chapter of an Irish Anthology. Such an Anthology, as I plan it, would include all that has been most nobly said in verse by Irish-speaking men and women from the beginning to our own time. In the concluding chapter of it I would bring together such of the songs of the unknown singers of the hamlets and hillsides as seem to me worthy to be placed by the side of those that have been most finely fashioned by the master-craftsmen among the bards. The wind of poetry bloweth where it listeth, and in Ireland in these latter years it has often blown into the cottage of the peasant.

I have availed myself freely of the harvests of other gleaners, but always with due acknowledgment. The fact that a piece has been often published or translated has not

agus as tiomruḡaḋ cnuairiḡ agus coraid si féin
agus ir amlaid rin do cuairtuirgear ḡaḋ deaḡ-leabhar
agus ḡaḋ iirpleabhar dár cpaobḡḡaḋilead romham as
tionól agus as tiomruḡaḋ cnuairiḡ agus coraid
do'n leabhar ra.

seemed to me justification for excluding it. The only question with which I have concerned myself is the question of literary excellence. I will print here nothing in which I do not find the essential wine of poetry.

In the English prose versions I have tried to preserve something of the march of the originals, an attempt which accounts for most of the not very numerous departures from literalness in the rendering.

Caoineadh Mhuirne

"A pheadair, a dprtaí, an b'aca tú mo ghrá
geal?"

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

"Connaic mé ar ball é i lár a námá."

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

"Šadair i leit, a t'á mhuirne, šo šcaoinit' rí' mo
šrá' geal."

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

"Céar' t'á le caoineadh ašainn muna šcaoinimí
a ónámá?"

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

"Cia hé an fear b'eaš rin ar órann na
páiré?"

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

"An é nac n-aicnišeann tú 'o m'ac, a
m'á'air?"

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

THE KEENING OF MARY

“ O Peter, O Apostle, hast thou seen my
bright love ? ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ I saw Him even now in the midst of His
foemen. ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ Come hither, two Marys, till ye keen my
bright love. ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ What have we to keen unless we keen His
bones ? ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ Who is that stately man on the tree of
passion ? ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ Dost thou not know thy Son, O Mother ? ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

"S an é rin an Maicín o'iomcúir mé trí páirt?"

(m'ócón aḡur m'ócón ó!)

Nó an é rin an Maicín do pugaó ran rtabla?

(m'ócón aḡur m'ócón ó!)

“Nó an é rin an Máicín do hoileadó i n-uacht máire?”

(m'ócón agur m'ócón ó!)

"Εἰτε, ὦ μακάριε, ἢ καὶ βί οὐαίρετε."

(m'ócón aḡur m'ócón ó!)

"S an e rin an capŭr do buail tŕiot na
táirngni?

(m'ócón aḡur m'ócón ó !)

Nó an í rin an tpleaḡ do cuairt trí do lár geal?

(m'ócón 45ur m'ócón ó !)

Nó an í sin an coróin rríonta éadó ar do
mullaé áluinn?"

(m'ócón aḡur m'ócón ó!)

"Εἰτε, ἂ ἤταται, ἢ ἡ ἀβὶ ἐπαύετε.

(m'ócón aṣur m'ócón ó!)

“ And is that the little Son I carried nine months?

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

And is that the little Son that was born in the stable?

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

And is that the little Son that was nursed on Mary's breast? ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ Hush, O Mother, and be not sorrowful! ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ And is that the hammer that struck home the nails through Thee?

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

And is that the spear that went through Thy white side?

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

And is that the crown of thorns that crowned Thy beauteous head? ”

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

“ Hush, O Mother, and be not sorrowful!

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó !)

Éirte, a mháthair, ir ná bí cfráiríte:

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

Tá mná mo éaoimte le breite fóir, a mháthair.

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

A bean atá as zol, ve bairr mo báir-re

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

Béir na céadta inoiu i nšáirvóin páirtair!"

(m'ócón ašur m'ócón ó!)

Ó mhaoi ar muig éuilinn i niam-Connacáid do éualai
Caoinead muipe. Máire níc flanncaóa vob' ainm ašur ploinnead
oi, ašur fear ve muinntir éirte do bí mar fear póirta aici. Baó
zheann leat beite as éirteadé léite ašur í as canad an éaoimte
zo eumad ceolmair. Bí ve méir a tmuige do muipe ašur dá
mac zup ril rí na fmará veor ašur í as mád na mann zupb'
fluc zmuada ašur bholad ói. Ná véantair ionzantair ve rin,
óir ir minic páir éirte dá caoinead zo veomad as zaeóealaid.

Do éuirear an Caoinead i zcló ran z"Clairéam Soluir,"
meadon fózmair 24, 1904. Tá cur ve as an émaoibín doibinn
i zCaoinead na vóirí muipe i meaz amhán vada éúige
Connacé. Ir vóig liom zo vfuil dá amhán meazta le n-a
éile ran zCaoinead úo an émaoibín .i. Caoinead muipe ašur
amhán eile ar a vtuhtar páir muipe. Tá páir muipe
i n-a hiomlán as máire níc flanncaóa.

Hush, O Mother, and be not sorrowful!

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó!)

The women of My keening are yet unborn,
little Mother.

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó!)

O woman who weepst, by this My death

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó!)

There will be hundreds to-day in the garden
of Paradise!"

(M'óchón agus m'óchón ó!)

I heard "The Keening of Mary" from a woman of Moycullen, in Iar-Connacht. Her own name was Mary Clancy, and she was married, as she told me, to one of the Keadys. I have heard nothing more exquisite than her low sobbing recitative, instinct with a profoundly felt emotion. There was a great horror in her voice at "'S an é rin an carúir," etc., and with the next stanza the chant rose into a wail. She cried pitifully and struck her breast several times during the recitation. It is a very precious thing for the world that in the homes of Ireland there are still men and women who can shed tears for the sorrows of Mary and her Son.

I published the poem in *An Claidheamh Soluis* for October 24th, 1904. Portion of it is incorporated in "The Keening of the Three Marys," printed by Dr. Douglas Hyde in his "Religious Songs of Connacht." I think Dr. Hyde's poem is an amalgam of "The Keening of Mary" with another poem called "The Passion of Mary" which I also recovered from Mary Clancy.

II

maibhna òonncadh b'ain

Ir ar an mbaile seo connaic riò an t-iongnadh
Ar Òonncadh b'ain ir é d'á d'adornadh.
Bí cairpín bán air i n-áit a hata,
Ir róipín cnáibe i n-áit a éarabata.

Tá mé ag teacht ar fear na hoibche
Mar beadh uainín i meargh reilbe caoradh,
Mo brolladh forghailte ir mo éann liom
rghailte,
Ir cá bfuiginn mo d'earbhráitirín roimh am áit
rínte?

Caoin me an céad t'ear ag sob an loch,
An d'ara t'ear ag bun do éiríche,
An tríoimh t'ear or cionn do cuip-re
i meargh na n'gall ir mo éann d'á rghailteadh.

Dá mbeiteá agam-ra ran áit ar cóir duit,
Tior i Sligeach nó i mbaile an Róthba,

II

THE KEEN FOR FAIR-HAIRED DONOUGH

It is in this town ye have seen the wonder,
The dooming of Donough the fair.
He wore a white cap in place of his hat,
And a hempen rope in place of his neckcloth.

I have been coming all the night long
Like a little lamb in the midst of a great
flock of sheep,
My breast all bare, and my hair all streaming,
And how should I find my little brother but
dead before me ?

I keened the first bout at the lip of the lake,
And the second bout at the foot of your
gallows,
The third bout above your corpse
In the midst of the Gall and my head all
throbbing.

If I had had you where you ought to have
been,
Down in Sligo or in Ballinrobe,

Uirriúe an énoc, gearraíúe an rópa,
I r leigriúe 'Donncáð 'Dáin a baile ar an eolar!

'S a 'Donncáð 'Dáin, níorb' í an énoc bað
 'buai tuit,

Áct uil cum an rgiobóil i r t'earair do bualað,
An céacta o'iomróð veireal i r tuaitbeal,
'S an taob' dearg de'n b'róo do cup i n-uactar!

A 'Donncáð 'Dáin, a dearbáitín oílir,
I r maít atá a fíor ašam riúto do 'dāin oíom tu,
Aš ól an cupáin, aš deargad an píopa,
'S aš riubal na o'riúcta i scuim na hoibce.

A míc Uí Múlcáin, a rgiúrra an mī-áir,
Ní laoz bó b'raoaiše do bí in mo o'riocáir,
Áct buacailín cruinn dear ar énoc 'r ar
 énocán

Do bairfead fuaim go bog binn ar camán!

'S a 'Donncáð 'Dáin, naé é rin an buaióread,
'S a feabhar i r o'ioméróctá rpuir ašur buatar!
Cuirpinn éadac fairanta de'n éadac bað
 buaine

I r cuirpinn amac tú mar mac tuine uarail.

They'd have broken the gallows, they'd have
cut the rope,
And let fair-haired Donough home on his
keeping !

O fair-haired Donough, 'tis not the gallows
was your due,
But to go to the barn and to thresh your corn,
To guide the plough to the right hand and
to the left,
And to turn up the red side of the sod !

O fair-haired Donough, dear little brother,
Well do I know what has taken you from me,
Drinking the cup and reddening the pipe,
And walking the dew in the dead of night.

And you, Mullane, ill-omened scourge,
No calf of a false cow was my brother,
But a tight comely little lad on hill and
hillock

Who would draw a sound soft and sweet
from a hurley !

And O fair-haired Donough, is it not the pity,
And how well you would carry spurs and
boots !

I might put fashionable clothes on you of
the most lasting cloth

And send you abroad as a gentleman's son.

A mhic uí Mhulcáin, ná maib do éilann mac i
brocáir a céile,

Ná do éilann ingean as iarraid rpré ort!—

Tá dá ceann an buir pólam, 'r an t-uirlár
líonta,

Ir Donncaó Uáin, mo dearbháitín, rínte.

Tá rpré Donncaó Uáin as teacht a baile,

Ir ní ba, caoiris é, ná capail,

ácc tobac ir píopaí ir coinnealla geala,

Ir ní dá maoideam é ar luicc a gcáitce!

Bí marbha Donncaó Uáin i mbéalaid na sean-baoinne
i nÁrainn nuair do bíor ann asur mé im' madaoim. Ir ó'n
gchaoibín doibinn do fuair an teirritiún rín roim an t-am
do bí "an taitéireoir" dá éir le céile asam-ra asur as
taós ó Donncaó. Do éiradam i gclo ran gcéad éir
de'n "aitéireoir" i ran mbliadain 1901.

Bean trléide éigin do rinne an marbha as caoinead
Connaéad óis do croid le Gallaid. ní ríor ciarb' é an
Connaéad ós úo, ná cáir croid é, ná ciarb' i bean a éoince
ná tuigtear ar na foclaib "dearbháitín," gc., sur deirbriúr
óó í, óir ir gnáad "dearbháitín" nó "deirbriúr" do gairm
de úine mar ainm ceana.

Tá trí ceatmáinn de na ceatmáinn rín roim an curta i
mbéarla as an Yéatad i "Kathleen Ni Houlihan."

May your sons, Mullane, never gather together,
Nor your daughters ever ask you for dowry !—
The two ends of the table are empty, and
the floor crowded,
And fair-haired Donough, my little brother,
laid out.

The dowry of fair-haired Donough is coming home,
And it is not kine, sheep, or horses,
But tobacco and pipes and white candles,
And no man grudges them to those that use
them !

“The Keen for Fair-haired Donough” was common in Aran when I was there as a lad. In 1901, when Mr. Tadhg O'Donoghue and I were putting *An tAithriseoir* together, Dr. Hyde sent me this Mayo version, and we published it in Part I. of *An tAithriseoir*, with one or two substitutions from my Aran source.

The Keen was made by some mountainy woman for a young Connachtman hanged by the English. Who he was, where he was hanged, or who was his keener we do not know. We are not to assume that she was his sister: the words “dearbhrathair,” “deirbhshiur” (“brother,” “sister”) are often used by our people as terms of endearment.

Mr. W. B. Yeats has given a beautiful English version of three of these stanzas in his “Kathleen Ni Houlihan.”

Οὐδὸν, Ἀ Ὀννηδάδ

Οὐδὸν, Ἀ Ὀννηδάδ ! μο μίλε κοζαρτάδ πά'ν ὑπότο πο
ρίντε,

πότο ἀν ποίειλλ 'ν-Ἀ λυίγε ἀρ το ἐολαινν βίς, μο
λομα-ρῆειντέαδ !

Ὅά μβεαδ ἀν κουλαδ πο ἰ ῖCιλλ na Ὀρομαδ ορε,
νό ἰ n-υαίς ραν λαρτάρ,

Μο ὑρόν το ὑοῖπαδ, cé ῖυρ μόρ μο ὀοδάρ, ἰρ ní
ὑεινν ἰθ' ὀιαδ ἀρ.

ἰρ ρεοιῶτε καίττε τᾶ na βλάτᾶ ρῖαιρεαδ ἀρ το
λεαβαῖδ ἐδοιλ-ρε,

Ὅα ὑρεαῖς ἰαδ ταμαλλ ἀέτ ἐρέις Ἀ ὀταίτνεαμ, níλ
ρναρ nά βρίῖς ἰονητα ;

'S τᾶ'ν βλάτ βα ῖιλε λιον ὀάρ πάρ ἀρ ἰτίρ μιαμ
nά ὀ'φάρραιδ ἐοιῶε

Ἀς ὀρεοῖς' ρᾶ ταλαμ ἰρ ῖο ὀεο ní ἐαεραῖδ ρέ Ἀς
κυρ ἐίρηγε εῖροιθε ορμ.

III

A FATHER KEENS HIS DROWNED CHILD

Ochón, O Donough ! my thousand whispers
 stretched under this sod,
The sod of sorrow on your little body, my
 utter anguish !
If this sleep were on you in Cíll na Dromad,
 or some grave in the West,
'Twould soften my suffering, though great
 my hurt, and I would not repine for
 you !

Withered and wasted are the flowers they
 scattered on your narrow bed,
They were lovely for a little time, but their
 radiance is gone, they have no comeli-
 ness or life ;
And the flower I held brightest of all that
 grew in soil or shall ever grow
Is rotting in the ground, and will spring no
 more to lift up my heart.

Oóc, a cumannaig! nár mhór an ríriúal é an
 t-uirge 'óc luarḡaó,
 San neart ro' cuirleannaib ná éinne i ngoipe duit
 do tabairt fuaḡtain:
 Sḡeal níor tugaó cuḡam ar baogal mo leinb ná
 ar déine a éruaótain—
 Ó, 'r go raḡainn go fonnmar ar doimhin-lic íppinn
 cum tú 'fuaḡailt!

Tá an rae go dorca, ní féadaim coḡlaó, do féan
 ḡaó rós mé:
 ḡaró doilb liom an ḡaeóilḡ orḡailte (ir olc an
 comairca é);
 Fuat liom realaó i ḡc'luadair carao, bíonn a
 nḡreann 'om éiaraó;
 Ó'n lá go bḡaca-ra go clát ar an nḡainnín cu'
 níor ḡeal an ḡrian dom.

Oóc, mo mairḡ! caó do déanraó fearca ir an
 raogal 'om fuaḡaó,
 San do láimín cailce mar leoiḡne i ḡcpannaib ar
 mo mhalainn ḡruamóa,
 Do béilín meala mar éol na n-ainḡeal go binn
 im' éluaraib,
 'ḡá ráó go cnearta liom, "Mo ḡraíóh m'áḡair
 boóc, ná bíó buaóḡairc orc!"

Alas, beloved ! was it not a great pity, the
water rocking you,
With no strength in your pulses nor any-
one near you that might save :
No news was brought to me of the peril of
my child or the extremity of his need—
Ah, though I'd gladly go to Hell's deep
flag to rescue you !

The moon is dark, I cannot sleep, all joy
has left me:
Rough and rude to me the open Gaelic ('tis
an ill sign) ;
I hate a while in the company of friends,
their merriment tortures me;
From the day I saw you dead on the sand,
the sun has not shone for me.

Alas, my grief ! what shall I do henceforth,
the world wearing me,
Without your chalk-white little hand like a
breath through trees on my sombre
brow,
Your little mouth of honey like angels'
music sweet in my ears
Saying to me gently, "dear heart, poor
father, be not troubled !"

Ó, mo áitir é! ir beas do ádarr-ra i ttrát mo
óóáir

Na beaó an leaó ro 'n-a laoc mear áalma i lár
na fóinne,

A gñíomáirta gairse ir a rmaointe meanman ar
ron na fóota,—

áct an té do deaibuis de óré ar an talam rinn,
ní mar rin o'óruis!

Ah, desolate ! I little thought in the time of
my hope
That this child would not be a swift valiant
hero in the midst of the band,
Doing deeds of daring and planning wisely
for the sake of Fódla,
But He who fashioned us of clay on earth
not so has ordered !

Deirín Dé

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Tá an bunnán donn ag labairt ran bfeít ;

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Tá an cúirnín lín amuis ran bfrad.

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Seodair ba riar le héirge an lae ;

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Ir maḡair mo leand dá bfeigilt ar féar.

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Éireodair sealaḡ ir maḡair ḡrian fé ;

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Tiocfair ba aniar le veiread an lae.

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Leisreao mo leand ag piocad rmeár,

Deirín dé, deirín dé !

Adt corlad ḡo rámh ḡo páinne an lae !

Le n-ár linn féin do rinnead an caoinead rin poimam, .i.
 "Oón, a Donnad," 7hl. páiríais ó héirgeiríais .i. veoiríais
 ḡaeóil atá ina coinníre i Spriingsfield, i Stát 'Marrachusetts

A SLEEP SONG

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

The brown bittern speaks in the bog ;

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

The nightjar is abroad on the heath.

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

Kine will go west at dawn of day ;

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

And my child will go to the pasture to
mind them.

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

Moon will rise and sun will set ;

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

Kine will come east at end of day.

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

I will let my child go gathering black-
berries,

Deirín dé, deirín dé!

If he sleeps softly till the ring of day !

“The Keen for the Drowned Child” was made in America by a poet still living, Patrick Hegarty, of Springfield, Mass. He sent it to me while I was editing *An*

i n-Ámeiriocá, do munne é. Mac máirneac leir do bátaó i n-aoir
 a ré bliadóan suir žab cuíá an t-ádaíri boét suir éum ré an
 caoineadó ro. Do éuir ré an caoineadó éuzam-ra, ázur do éuirhear-ra
 rá éló é ran ž“Claióeasá Soluir,” Aib. 7, 1906. Tuirgear ó
 líne 3 suirab ar Cúige Muíhan do'n ádaíri ázur suirab ar Cúige
 Connacé do mádaíri an leinb.

Ó mnaoi ve muiinntiri mo mádar do éualar “Deirín óé”
 ve'n éeao uairi, ázur mé im' leand. Do b'ar Connacé na Mióe
 ói. Tá an t-ámhán ar fuo na žaeóealacáta. Do daineap óá
 ceatmaíamain ve na ceitpe ceatmaíamainb rin roíam ar leagan do
 fuairi ámhaoib ó Luinžriž i žConnacé Coircailže.

Claidheamh Soluis, and I published it in the issue of 7th April, 1906. Cill na Dromad is the Munster churchyard in which the father had hoped his child would be buried—or else in “some grave in the West,” for its mother was from Connacht. I am more conscious in this than in the previous cases of the inadequacy of my English prose to render either the deep melody of the original or the exquisite delicacy of its phrase.

The Sleep Song which I add as a pendant to the song of childhood and death I have pieced together from my recollection of a song that I heard in my own childhood from the woman to whom I owe all my enthusiasms. Where my memory has failed I have filled in the lacunae from a version of the same lullaby taken down in West Cork by Mr. Amhlaoibh Lynch. The refrain “deirín dé” is the name given by children to the last spark at the end of a burning stick used in certain games. With the thought in stanzas 2 and 3 compare Sappho’s “Hesperus, thou bringest back all that daylight scattereth, thou bringest the lamb and the goat to fold, thou bringest the infant to its mother.”

ḡḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḁḁ ḡḁ ḡḁḁḁḁḁ

ḡḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḁḁ ḡḁ ḡḁḁḁḁḁ
 Ḑḁḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḡḁ ḡḁḁḁ,
 'S ḁḁḁḁ ḁḡ ḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḁḁ ḁḁḁ
 ḁḁ ḁḁḁ ḁḁḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁ !
 ḡḁ ḡḁḁ ḁḁ ḁḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁ
 'S ḁḁḁ' ḁḁḁ ḡḁḁ ḡḁḁḁ :
 ḁḁ ḁḁḁ ḁ ḡḁ ḁḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁ
 Ḑḁḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḡḁḁ ḁḁ.

ḁḁ ḁḁḁḁ ḁ ḁḁ ḁḁ ḁḁḁ,
 ḁḁ ḁḁḁḁ ḁ ḁḁ ḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁ,
 ḁḁ ḁḁḁḁ ḁ ḁḁ ḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁ,
 'S ḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḁ ḁḁ ḁḁ ḡḁḁḁ ;
 ḁḁ ḁḁḁḁ ḁḁ ḁḁ ḁḁḁ
 ḁ ḡḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḁḁ ḁ ḡḁḁ—
 'S ḁ Ḑḁḁ ḁḁḁ ḁḁ ḡḁ ḁḁḁḁḁḁ,
 ḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḁḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁ

HOW HAPPY THE LITTLE BIRDS

How happy the little birds
That rise up on high
And make music together
On a single bough !
Not so with me
And my hundred thousand loves :
Far apart on us
Rises every day.

Whiter she than the lily,
Than beauty more fair,
Sweeter voiced than the violin,
More lightsome than the sun ;
Yet beyond all that
Her nobleness, her mind,—
And O God Who art in Heaven,
Relieve my pain !

ΤΑΙΟ ΝΑ ΡΕΑΛΤΑ 'Ν-Α ΣΕΑΡΑΗ

ΤΑΙΟ ΝΑ ΡΕΑΛΤΑ 'Ν-Α ΡΕΑΡΑΗ ΑΝ ΑΝ ΔΕΡ,
 ΑΝ ΣΡΙΑΝ ΙΡ ΑΝ ΣΕΑΛΑΕ 'Ν-Α ΛΙΥΣΕ;
 ΤΑ ΑΝ ΦΑΙΡΡΥΣΕ ΤΡΑΙΣΤΕ ΣΑΝ ΒΡΑΟΝ,
 'S ΝΙΛ ΡΕΙΜ ΔΣ ΑΝ ΕΑΛΑ ΜΑΡ ΒΙΟΘ;
 ΤΑ ΑΝ ΟΥΑΙΟΙΝ Ι ΜΒΑΡΡΙΑΘ ΝΑ ΝΣΕΑΣ
 'ΣΑ ΡΙΟΡ-ΡΑΘ ΣΥΡ ΕΑΛΥΙΣ ΡΙ ΟΑΙΝΝ,—
 Α ΡΤΥΑΙΡΙΝ ΝΑ ΜΒΑΟΑΛΛ ΜΒΡΕΔΣ ΡΕΙΘ
 Ο'ΡΑΣ ΕΙΡΕ ΡΑ ΡΑΟΤΥΙΡΡΕ ΟΡΥΑΙΘ!

ΤΡΙ ΝΙΘ ΟΟ ΟΙΜ ΤΡΕΡ ΑΝ ΝΣΡΑΘ,
 ΑΝ ΡΕΑΟΑΘ, ΑΝ ΒΑΡ, ΙΡ ΑΝ ΡΙΑΝ,
 ΔΣΥΡ Μ'ΙΝΤΙΝΝ ΟΔ ΙΝΝΡΙΝ ΣΑΕ ΛΑ ΟΟΜ
 Μ'ΑΙΣΝΕΑΘ ΣΥΡ ΟΡΑΘ ΡΙ ΛΕ ΟΙΑΕ.
 'ΣΕ ΜΟ ΟΥΗΑ ΣΕΑΡ ΣΟ ΟΤΥΣΑΡ ΟΙ ΣΡΑΘ,
 'S ΣΟ ΜΒ'ΡΕΑΡΡΙ ΛΙΟΜ ΝΑΕ ΟΡΕΙΟΡΙΝΝ Ι ΡΙΑΗ,—
 'S Α ΜΑΙΣΘΕΑΝ, ΟΟ ΜΙΛΛ ΤΥ ΙΜ' ΛΑΡ ΜΕ,
 'S ΣΟ ΟΡΑΣΑΙΘ ΤΑ ΝΑ ΣΡΑΡΑ Ο ΟΙΑ!

THE STARS STAND UP

The stars stand up in the air,
The sun and the moon are set,
The sea has ebbed dry of its tide,
And the swan has no sway as she used;
The cuckoo in the tops of the boughs
Keeps telling me that she is fled,—
O darling of the brave free tresses
That left Ireland in utter unrest !

Three things I see through love,
Sin, and death, and pain ;
And my mind tells me day by day
That my soul she has wasted with woe.
My sharp grief that I e'er gave her love,
'Twere better I never had seen her,—
O maiden, my heart you have hurt,
May you get forgiveness from God !

VII

neilí b́án

Δ- Neilí b́án, fuiré lámh liom, a cara geal mo
chríóde,

Ir leis mo lámh ar do bhráðair nó ní mairfidh mé
beo mí;

Do fhnámar an tSiúir leat an 'gus an tSionainn
mór is' óidid

Go rinne lámh leat, a shrád gíl, i mBaile Locha
Riá!

Dá mbeo liom-ra Portomna agus Baile Locha
Riá,

Luimnead na long agus Conntae Baile Áta Cliat,
Ar do muinntir-re do roinneann a leat ir a dá
tír

O'fonn out i gcleamhna leat lá fada agus
blíodain!

Ó, ir truaigh gear nár cailleadh mé amuis ar an
ríad

An áit a mbeo mo éadaí le piocad as an
briad,

NELLY BHÁN

Sit beside me, Nelly Bhán, O bright friend
 of my heart,
 Let my hand rest on your bosom or I shall
 not live a month ;
 I have swum the broad Suir and the great
 Shannon after you
 To be beside you, O bright love, in the
 town of Loughrea !

If Portumna were mine and the town of
 Loughrea,
 Limerick of the ships and the county of
 Dublin,
 Their half or two-thirds I'd share among
 your kin
 With desire to be joined to you for a long
 day and a year !

'Tis a bitter pity I did not die out on the
 mountain
 In the place where my bones would be
 picked by the raven,

1 nòdh sup tuic mé 1 nshráð leat, a Neilí bán na
sciað,—

'S mo mállaét ar 'do máicéin naé dil léi mipe
tuic mar élaímhain!

1r binn brónaé 1ao aímhán shráða na nshaeóeal. 'Do éluirped
aímhán shinn 1 mearsh na nshaoine, aét ní ámu-filicéaét atá inr
na haímhánaið rin, asur níl mórhán meara as luét na shaeóilge
oipea. Tuigeanh luét na shaeóilge naé fada ó n-a céile an
áilne asur an bhón, asur má'r áluinn an níó é an shráð sup
minic bhón 1 n-a óiaíó. "Tí níó 'do éim tíér an nshráð : an
peacaó, an báir, 1r an pían." 1 shúige Mumhan 'do minneao "naé
aoibhinn 'do na h'éiníníð" asur "táio na réalta 'n-a Seapáí,'
aét tá an céao aímhán aca ar fuo na shaeóealtaéta anoir
asur a éuma féin as shac ceannatar aih. 1 shúige Connacé 'do
minneao "Neilí Bán." Éipear na tí aímhán 1 sh"Ceol Síóe,'
aét tá m'innhín féin asam oipea anho.

Since fate has made me love you, O my
white ringleted Nelly,—
And my curse upon your mother who will
not have me for a son !

The love of the Irish peasant, if his love songs give it true expression, is not a thing of gladness but a thing of sadness, with a terrible passion at its core. In each of these songs (and while each is distinctive in its beauty they are all characteristic in their atmosphere) there is the same tender melancholy, broken startlingly by a gust of passion. "How Happy the Little Birds," and "The Stars Stand Up," are from Munster, but I find the first of them among the folk everywhere. "Nelly Bhán" is from Connacht. In translating "The Stars Stand Up," I have doubtless been influenced by Mr. MacDonagh's verse-rendering, though I have not looked at the latter recently. All three songs are well known : versions of them (which, however, I have not followed very closely) will be found in Miss Borthwick's "Ceol Sidhe."

Domhnall Óg

A Domhnall Óg, má téigir tar fairrige
 Beir mé féin leat, ir ná déin do
 dearmad,

Ir beiré agat féirín lá donais ir marthair
 Ir ingean ríog Shéige mar céile leabta
 agat.

Má téigir-re anonn tá comhartha agam
 ort:

Tá cúl fionn agur dá fúil glara agat,
 Tá docán déas ió' cúl buirde bacalla
 Mar beiré beal na bó nó rór i ngarraite.

Ir déirdeannaic áréir do labair an gádar
 ort,

Do labair an naoragac ra cupraicín
 doimhin ort,

Ir tú ió' éasgairde donair ar fuo na
 scoillte,—

Ir go rabair gan céile go brát go
 bfaigair mé!

YOUNG DONAL

O young Donal, if you go over the sea
 Do not forget to take myself with you,
 And you will have a fairing on fair and
 market day
 And the King of Greece's daughter to be
 your bedmate.

If you go across I have a sign to know you
 by :
 You have a fair *cúl* and two grey eyes,
 Twelve curls in your yellow ringleted *cúl*
 Like a cowslip or a rose in a garden.

'Tis late last night the beagle spoke of
 you,
 The snipe spoke of you in the deep of the
 bog,
 But you were gone like a lone barnacle
 goose among the woods,—
 May you be without mate forever until you
 get me !

Do gheallair dom-rá, aghur d'innhir breáas dom,
Go mbeiteá romam-rá as cró na gcaorac:
Do leigear fead aghur trí céad glaothac cuíat,
'S ní bfuair ann acé uan as méilic!

Do gheallair dom-rá, níó baó deacair duit,
Luigear óir fá éirinn reoil airis;
Óa baile deas de bailic maris;
Ir cúirt breáas aolá coir taob na fairise.

Do gheallair dom-rá, níó nárb' féidir,
Go ttabairtá láimhinne de croiceann éirí dom;
Go ttabairtá bróga de croiceann éan dom;
Ir culair de'n tríoda baó daoire i n-Éirinn.

A Domhnall Óig, b'feair duit mire asat
'Ná bean uairt uairdeac iomairac;
Do éirífairinn bó aghur do-géanairinn cuigearinn
duit,
Ir, óa mbaó éirair é, do buairinn buille teat!

You promised me (and you told me a lie)
That you would be before me at the sheep
pen ;
I sent a whistle and three hundred shouts
to you,
And I heard nothing there but a lamb
bleating !

You promised me (a thing that were hard
for you)
A fleet of gold with masts all silver,
Twelve towns, each one a market-town,
And a fair lime-white court beside the sea.

You promised me (a thing impossible)
That you would give me gloves of a fish's
skin,
That you would give me shoes of the skin
of birds,
And a suit of the costliest silk in Ireland.

O young Donal, I were meeter mate for
you
Than a proud overbearing lady ;
I would milk a cow, I would do the churn-
ing for you,
And if it went hard I would strike a blow
with you !

Oc ocón, aḡur ní le hocpar,
Uipearba bíð, oíḡe, ná cotalta,
Fá nḡearr dom-ḡa beic tanair cḡuálda,
Aḡt ḡráð fir óḡs ir é bḡeoir ḡo follur me!

Ir moḡ ar mairin do connac-ḡa an t-óḡḡear
Ar muin áparill aḡ ḡabáil an bóḡair;
Níor ḡruio ré liom ir níor éur ná rḡoró orḡ,
'S ar mo ápará a baile dom 'reáð do ḡoilear
mo bóḡain.

Nuair éḡḡim-re féin ḡo Tobar an Uaignir
Suirim ríor aḡ déanam buáarḡa,
Nuair éim an raḡal ir ná feicim mo buááill
ḡo raib ḡḡáil an ómair i mbairr a ḡruáḡna.

Siú é an Domnac do éuḡar ḡráð úit,
An Domnac úireáð roim Domnac Cáḡa,
Ir mire ar mo ḡlúinib aḡ léḡeáð na ḡáire
'Seáð bí mo óá fúil aḡ ríor-áḡairḡ an ḡráða
úit.

Dubairḡ mo máirín liom ḡan labairḡ leat
Inniu ná i mbárac ná Dia Domnaisḡ,—
Ir olc an tráḡ do éuḡ rí roḡa dom,
'Sé dúnað an dorair é car éir na roḡla.

Och ochon ! And it is not hunger,
Want of food, of drink, or of sleep,
That has caused me to be worn and wan,
But 'tis the love of a young man has plainly
wasted me.

'Tis early in the morning I saw the youth
Mounted on horseback going the road ;
He did not draw near me or speak a word
to me,
And on returning home I wept my fill.

When I go to the Well of Loneliness
I sit down making lamentation,
When I see the world and see not my lad,
Who had the shadow of amber mantling
in his cheeks.

Yon is the Sunday I gave you love,
The very Sunday before Easter Sunday,
When I was on my knees reading the Passion
My two eyes were constantly giving you
love.

My mother told me not to speak to you,
To-day nor to-morrow nor on Sunday,—
It was a bad time she gave me my choice,
'Twas shutting the door after the theft.

Ó a de, a máistirín, tabair mé féin do,
Iz tabair a bfuil agat de'n traoḡal go léir do;
Éiríḡ féin ag iarraid' déirce
Agus ná gab riar ná aniar 'om éileamh.

Tá mo éiríde-re com' tuḡ le háirne,
Nó le gual tuḡ do beaḡ i gceartúḡain,
Nó le bonn bhróige beaḡ ar hallaib' bána,
Iz sur deirir lionn tuḡ díom or cionn mo
fláinte.

Do bainir roir díom, iz do bainir riar díom,
Do bainir rotham iz do bainir im díaid' díom,
Do bainir gealaḡ iz do bainir grian díom,
'S iz ró-mór m'eaḡla sur bainir Dia díom!

Iz é taḡḡ Ó Donnḡaḡa do éirí ríor an t-áthráin rin rotham.
Donnḡaḡ Ó Darrḡáin, sean-táillicíir i gcearras ná bfeair,
gceonntae corcaige, d'áiríir do é. Do éiríeamar i gcló ran
geḡaḡ éirí de'n "Aíreirí" é ran mbliadain 1900.

O, little mother, give myself to him,
And give all that you have in the world to
him,
Go yourself asking alms
And come not west or east to seek me.

My heart is as black as a sloe,
Or as black as coal that would be in a forge,
Or as the sole of a shoe on white halls,
And sure you have wasted my life and health.

You have taken east and you have taken
west from me,
You have taken the path before me and the
path behind me,
You have taken moon and you have taken
sun from me,
And great is my fear that you have taken
God from me !

“Domhnall Og” was written down by Mr. Tadhg O'Donoghue from the recitation of Denis Dorgan of Carrignavar, County Cork, and was first printed by Mr. O'Donoghue and me in our *Aithriseoir*, Part I., 1900. Mr. Yeats has translated some of it in his “Ideas of Good and Evil.”

SOME ASPECTS OF IRISH
LITERATURE

SOME ASPECTS OF IRISH LITERATURE *

Now that the libraries have yielded up so much of the buried treasures of Irish literature and that so much more which has not yet seen the light of day has been surveyed and appraised by competent authorities, one is better able than one was even so recently as ten years ago to fix a value and attach a definition to Ireland's contribution to the world's vision of beauty. One is able to form some idea of what distant horizons have been scanned by Irish-speaking men, what heights scaled, what depths sounded. And when our knowledge is just a little wider and deeper than it is at present it will be found that an amazing thing has happened. It will be found that the literary history of the world, what is commonly accepted as literary history, has left out of account one of the great literary peoples. Just as the rediscovery of the buried

* A lecture delivered before the National Literary Society, 9th December, 1912.

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cities of the East has made it necessary for us to re-write social and political history, so will the rediscovery of this buried literature of the West make it necessary for us to re-write literary history. And it will mean not only a re-writing of literary history, but a general readjustment of literary values, a general raising of literary standards. The world has had a richer dream of beauty than we had dreamed it had. Men here saw certain gracious things more clearly and felt certain mystic things more acutely and heard certain deep music more perfectly than did men in ancient Greece. And it is from Greece that we have received our standards.

How curiously might one speculate if one were to imagine that when the delvers of the fifteenth century unearthed the buried literatures of Greece and Rome they had stumbled instead upon that other buried literature which was to remain in the dust of the libraries for four centuries longer ! Then instead of the classic revival we should have had the Celtic revival ; or rather the Celtic would have become the classic and the Gael would have given laws to Europe. I do not say positively that literature would have gained, but I am

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not sure that it would have lost. Something it would have lost : the Greek ideal of perfection in form, the wise calm Greek scrutiny. Yet something it would have gained : a more piercing vision, a nobler, because a more humane, inspiration, above all a deeper spirituality. One other result would have followed : the goodly culture and the fine mysticism of the Middle Ages would not have so utterly been lost. And, thinking of the effect of literature upon men's lives and conduct, one may add that the world might not have proved so untrue to so many of its righteous causes.

Now I claim for Irish literature, at its best, these excellences : a clearer than Greek vision, a more generous than Greek humanity, a deeper than Greek spirituality. And I claim that Irish literature has never lost those excellences : that they are of the essence of Irish nature and are characteristic of modern Irish folk poetry even as they are of ancient Irish epic and of mediaeval Irish hymns. This continuity of tradition amid all its changing moods (and the moods of Irish literature are as various as the moods of Irish climate) is one of the striking things about it ; the old man who croons above a Connacht hearthplace the

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songs he made in his youth is as definitely a descendant of the elder bards as a Tennyson is of a Chaucer. I propose to illustrate what I mean, and to show how an attitude characteristic of Irish-speaking men in the days when they shaped the *Táin* is reproduced in the song in which an Irish peasant woman of to-day reproaches her lover or keens over her dead child.

What I have called here clearness of vision is part of a great sincerity, a great feeling for ultimate reality, which the supreme poets always have. The clear sheer detection and statement of some naked truth, the touching of some deep bedrock foundation, the swift sure stroke at the very heart of a thing : that is what I mean. There is sometimes a harshness in the relentlessness of this truth-telling, a pain in the pleasure of this revelation. The heart shakes, because for a moment one sees with the awful clearness with which God sees.

The passage in the tale of "The Sickbed of Cuchulainn and the only Jealousy of Emer" in which Fand and Emer both beg to be rejected by Cuchulainn, whom they love, because neither will have half his love, shows this understanding and this sounding of the

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depths. "If thou followest this woman," said Emer, "I shall not refuse thee to her. For indeed everything red is beautiful, everything new is bright, everything high is lovely, everything common is bitter, everything we are without is prized, everything known is neglected, till all knowledge is known. O youth," she said, "I was at one time happy with thee, and we should be so again if I were pleasing to thee." "Thou art pleasing to me," said Cuchulainn, "and thou shalt always be pleasing to me." Then said Fand: "Let me be rejected." "Nay, it were fitter to reject me," said Emer. "Not so," said Fand, "it is I who shall be rejected, and long have I been in peril of it." And Fand bade farewell to Cuchulainn, and went back to her own country.

This seems to me to be the authentic note of great imaginative psychology. And I find equally authentic, albeit startling in the audacity of its sincerity, the psychology and the imagination which in the tale of the "Tragic Fate of Cuchulainn," when the hero is being drawn forth to his doom by the din of phantasmagoric battles, make Emer, in the last forlorn hope of saving him, send to him that

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very Fand—the woman whose power over him she had such good reason to know. How differently inferior artists would have imagined either of these episodes! How a conventional sentimentality would have balked at making Emer capable of that great sacrifice!

Sheer clear naked truth, the great reality of love and sacrifice, the miracle of the sacrifice by love of itself, the breaking down of strong barriers in the presence of some awful issue—again and again through the centuries have Irish-speaking men seen and described these things. I will show you what I mean again in a mediaeval poem—the “Parting of Goll and his Wife.” I quote it in Miss Hull’s verse translation in her recently-published “Poem-Book of the Gael,” though Mr. MacNeill’s more literal prose-translation in his “Duanaine Finn,” where the poem was first printed, is equally excellent. Goll and his wife are hemmed in by Fionn on a sea-girt rock without chance of escape.

Goll speaks :

The end is come ; upon this narrow rock
To-morrow I must die ;
Wife of the ruddy cheeks and hair of flame,
Leave me to-night and fly.

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Seek out the camp of Fionn and of his men
Upon the westward side ;
Take there, in time to come, another mate :
Here I abide.

Goll's wife replies :

Which way, O Goll, is my way, and thou
perished ?

Alas ! few friends have I !
Small praise that woman hath whose lord
is gone,
And no protector nigh !

What man should I wed ? I whom great
Goll cherished

And made his wife ?
Where in the East or West should one be
sought
To mend my broken life ?

Shall I take Oisin, son of Fionn the Wise,
Or Carroll of the blood-stained hand ?
Shall I make Angus, son of Hugh, my prize ?
Or swift-foot Corr, chief of the fighting
band ?

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I am as good as they ; aye, good and better,
Daughter of Conall, Monarch of the
West,
Fostered was I with Conn the Hundred-
Fighter,
Best among all the best.

Thee out of all I loved, thee my first master,
Gentlest and bravest thou ;
Seven years we lived and loved, through
calm and tumult,
And shall I leave thee now ?

From that night till to-night I found thee
never
Of harsh or churlish mind ;
And here I vow, no other man shall touch me,
Kind or unkind.

Here on this narrow crag, foodless and
sleepless,
Thou takest thy last stand ;
A hundred heroes, Goll, lie rotten round thee,
Slain by thy dauntless hand.

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In the wide ocean near us, life is teeming ;
Yet on this barren rock
I sink from hunger, and the wild briny
waters
My thirst-pangs mock.

Fierce is our hunger, fierce the five battalions
Sent here to conquer thee ;
But fiercer yet the drought that steals my
beauty
Midst this surrounding sea.

Though all my dear loved brothers by one
caitiff
Lay slaughtered in my sight,
That man I'd call my friend, yea, I would
love him
Could thy thirst ease to-night.

Eat, son of Morna, batten on these dead
bodies,
This is my last behest ;
Feast well, gaunt Goll, then quench thy
awful craving
Here at my breast.

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Nought is there more to fear, nought to be
 hoped for,
 Of life and all bereft
High on this crag, abandoned and forsaken,
 Nor hope nor shame is left.

Goll speaks :

• • • • • •
Oh ! pitiful how this thing hath befallen,
 Little red mouth !
Lips that of old made speech and happy
 music,
 Now dry and harsh with drought.

Ever I feared this end ; my haunting
 terror
 By wave and land
Was to be caught by Fionn and his
 battalions,
 On some stark, foodless strand.

Depart not yet ; upon this barren islet,
 Beneath this brazen sky,
Sweet lips and gentle heart, we sit together
 Until we die.

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And now I ask you to observe the same utter sincerity, the same stripping bare of the reality from the surrounding conventions, in a modern poem of the people. A peasant girl, betrayed by a lover whom she had trusted, speaks to her mother :

“ O little mother, give myself to him,
Give all that you have in the world to him,
Go yourself asking for alms,
And do not come east or west to seek me.”

She would abandon herself altogether to her betrayer ; and she would do it now with her eyes open, for she says to him:

“ You have taken east, and you have taken
west from me,
You have taken from me the path before
and the path behind me,
You have taken moon, and you have taken
sun from me,
And great is my fear that you’ve taken God
from me ! ”

The Irish strength and truth where the artists of a more sentimental people like the

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English would have carefully provided a lachrymose ending stand out conspicuously in the conclusion of that surpassing tale, "The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne." This was pointed out in a fine study contributed by the late Father O'Carroll to the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record" a good many years ago. The unknown novelist (for "Diarmuid and Grainne" is in all essentials what we now call a novel) did not make Grainne die of grief for Diarmuid. She had wooed Diarmuid and may have loved him, and his death had come from that wooing. But love was not the greatest thing in Grainne, if indeed there was love in her at all. Irish literature had given memorable types of woman's love, Deirdre and Emer and Fand and Leadan and Crede, enduring types of the love that is faithful even unto death. But Grainne was no Deirdre or Emer. She is the Hedda Gabler of Irish literature, the woman who craved to have her destinies interwoven with those of a strong splendid man : when Diarmuid's red cheek was white in death and his clustering hair had mingled with the dust Grainne turned to Fionn, the strong subtle man who had slain him. It is entirely in keeping with her character as

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conceived by the novelist that after Diarmuid's death she should purchase power and splendour by wedding Fionn. "I trow, O Fionn," quoth Oisín, "that henceforth thou wilt keep Grainne safely." Whereat, concludes the storyteller, Grainne bowed her head in shame. This grimly ironic note is not struck in European literature again until the last half of the nineteenth century.

No great literature has shown a subtler understanding of women than Irish literature. Alike in the Táin and in the fugitive love songs of the manuscripts and of the countryside we come upon profound intuitions or flashes of imagination which reveal more than many modern novels and much modern poetry. Some of the passages I have quoted will stand as illustrations. And take the couplet of a peasant cradle song which Mr. Yeats has elaborated into a charming little lullaby. A mother says to her child :

"Cad déanfaidh mé gan mo ghiolla
beag,
Nuair bheidh tu mór is críonna ?"

"What shall I do without my little lad when

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you will be big and grown ? ” Or, as Mr. Yeats has it :

“ I kiss you and kiss you,
My pigeon, my own ;
Ah ! how I shall miss you,
When you have grown ! ”

There is a real poignancy there which one does not often meet with in poems of motherhood and childhood. Many mothers must have thought just that : only a great poet could have imagined it. One finds the same yearning of motherhood but in a note of high tragedy in the mediaeval “ Lament of the Mothers for the Slaughtered Innocents.” Think of what obvious things you and I should have made the mothers say, and then note that the Irish poet makes them say the things that were not obvious, but which when we hear them we yet recognise to be the inevitable things. The second woman cries (I give Mr. Graves’ translation) :

“ ’Tis my own son that from me you wring,
I deceived not the King.
But slay me, even me,
And let my boy be.

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A mother most hapless.
My bosom is sapless,
My eyes one tearful river,
My frame one fearful shiver,
My husband sonless ever,
And I a sonless wife
To live a death in life.

O my son ! O God of Truth !
O my unrewarded youth,
O my birthless sicknesses
Until doom without redress.
O my bosom's silent nest,
O the heart broke in my breast."

In an article on " The Personal in the New Poetry " contributed to " An Macaomh " my friend Mr. MacDonagh recently pointed out that the dramatic lyric is almost as old in Irish as poetry itself, and that poetry had to revolve through a whole cycle before the form came back to Ireland again in modern Anglo-Irish poetry. He quotes the monologue of Eve published by Dr. Kuno Meyer in " Eriu " as a good example of the early Irish dramatic lyric, " telling in those vivid nervous lines of the *dán díreach* clear and simple thoughts of passion or emotion—poems that translate

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so literally into all languages that in translation they appear almost too simple." Mr. MacDonagh translates this poem almost word for word :

I am Eve, great Adam's wife,
I that wrought my children's loss,
I that wronged Jesus of life,
By right 'tis I had borne the cross.

I a kingly house forsook,
Ill my choice and my disgrace,
Ill the counsel that I took,
Withering me and all my race.

I that brought the winter in
And the windy glistening sky,
I that brought terror and sin,
Hell and pain and sorrow, I.

I quote the poem as an example of the Irish power of clear vivid unadorned statement. Mr. MacDonagh regards it as typical of the early Irish dramatic lyric—only modernly, he thinks, has the dramatic lyric had the intense human thrill of individual subtle character. Yet surely that greatest of Irish dramatic lyrics (and it is as old as the tenth century) has

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that thrill: I mean "The Old Woman of Beare:" No doubt that old woman speaks the universal language of old age; no doubt she might say to any old sad woman with memories of a splendid youth what every poet can in a sense say to every reader: "Unless these words are as much to you as they are to me they are nothing and less than nothing." And yet she is not a mere type. There is an individuality there, a subtle self-characterisation. We know her; her sorrow is unforgettable, and the phrases in which she expresses her sorrow linger in the mind as do the phrases of Shelley's "Flight of Love" or the phrases of Ronsard's "Quand vous serez bien vieille." I would place this dramatic lyric among the greatest dramatic lyrics of all literature. Like Deirdre, the Old Woman of Beare will pass into many literatures, and poets in many tongues will vie with one another in giving new breath to her sorrow.

I have spoken of the Irish power of clear vivid unadorned statement. Some of you, remembering the rich and royal redundancy of a good deal of later Irish verse, will ask whether clear vivid unadorned statement is really an Irish characteristic. It is. It was

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an Irish characteristic from the beginning and remained an Irish characteristic as long as *Dán Díreach* verse ruled, and longer ; for it remains a characteristic of the best of the peasant poetry. The reserve and severity of the early Irish " I am Eve, great Adam's wife " are as apparent in the seventeenth-century poem of Keating, " A bhean lán de stuaim " :

" O woman full of subtlety,
Keep from me thy hand."

The strength and brevity of the language here are as striking as the candour and energy of the thought. Yet Keating was one of those who ushered in the new school in poetry.

There is no such thing as sentimentality in Irish literature. One finds in the later literature, especially in the later poetry, bad taste of various kinds, but never that particular kind of bad taste. The characteristic faults of the later poetry spring from various causes. First, the metres which had been elaborated became a snare. And secondly, Irish poets, most conservative of races, retained an obsolete machinery and an outworn set of symbols

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long after the machinery had become unnecessary and the symbols had ceased to be convincing. There is a place for symbols in literature, but there can be no excuse for using symbols in which you do not yourself believe. That way lies insincerity, and without sincerity there can be no literature. Let me illustrate what I mean by a parallel thing which has taken place in recent Anglo-Irish poetry. Either Mr. Russell or Mr. Yeats discovered a certain symbolism in certain white birds spoken of in connection with Angus in one particular passage of early Irish literature. They straightway let loose those birds upon Anglo-Irish poetry, and for many of us since the music of Anglo-Irish poetry has almost been drowned by the needless flapping of those white wings. You never open a new book of Anglo-Irish verse but the birds of Angus fly out. It almost reminds one of the nursery rhyme: "When the pie was opened the birds began to sing." When the book is opened the birds begin to fly. And the curious thing to us who know *Irish* literature is that the birds of Angus never trouble us there at all. They are the most unobtrusive fowl imaginable.

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Irish poetry has of course its symbols, and much of the later Irish verse is fully symbolic—"Eamonn an Chnuic," for instance, and "An Druimfhionn Donn Dilis," and "An Draighnean Donn," and, as I believe, "An Bunán Buidhe." But here I am concerned with the employment of outworn symbols and the retention of obsolete conventions. So many of the elegies of the eighteenth-century poets are insincere and unconvincing on this account. But there were always poets individual enough to stand apart from this tendency: Seán O Neachtain, for instance, who used the rich and elaborate metres without allowing himself to be caught in their snare, and who went back from artificiality to the joyous artlessness of the first notes of Irish poetry. And my contention here is this: that alike in early Irish literature and in the finest songs of the later peasant poets there is absolutely nothing of this make-believe, but always the clear strong expression of a genuine emotion. The make-believe phase was merely a phase that affected only two or three generations, and not all the poets even of those generations. The style of the eighteenth-century school has no more right

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to be regarded as nationally characteristic than the costume of the eighteenth century to be regarded as a national costume. Both were phases, and in both Ireland shared to a certain extent with the Continent.

The *aisling* and the *caoineadh*—the vision and the elegy—are the forms in which the dead conventions are most persistent and most wearisome. But what noble vision poetry early Irish literature had produced ! And how reserved, how sincere, how true and right, how free from false sentiment are such early elegies as—I will not take the supreme ones, those of Deirdre and Crede—but the Dirge of Congall Claen in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, or that of Gormley for Niall Glundubh, or those of Mac Liag and Mac Giolla Caoimh for Brian Bóroimhe, or the later elegy on the Irish princes dead at Rome. In these poems there is no conventional machinery, no repetition of outworn symbols. And one finds the same characteristics, the same rightness and sincerity, in elegies made by peasant men and women for their dead lovers or their dead children. Let me quote one at length, a very recent one, made in America by a poet still living for a child of his that was drowned.

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He sent it to me several years ago and I published it in "An Claidheamh Soluis" recently I republished it, with a prose translation, in the "Irish Review." In the Irish original there is a deep melody and an exquisite delicacy of phrase, to render which English prose is wholly inadequate :

" Ochón, O Donough ! my thousand
whispers stretched under this sod,
The sod of sorrow on your little body, my
utter anguish !
If this sleep were on you in Cill na Dromad,
or some grave in the West,
'Twould soften my suffering, though great
my hurt, and I would not repine for
you !

" Withered and wasted are the flowers they
scattered on your narrow bed,
They were lovely for a little time, but their
radiance is gone, they have no comeliness
or life ;
And the flower I held brightest of all that
grew in soil or shall ever grow
Is rotting in the ground, and will spring no
more to lift up my heart.

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“ Alas, beloved ! was it not a great pity, the
water rocking you,
With no strength in your pulses nor anyone
near you that might save :
No news was brought to me of the peril
of my child or the extremity of his
need—
Ah, though I'd gladly go to Hell's deep
flag to rescue you !

“ The moon is dark, I cannot sleep, all joy
has left me :
Rough and rude to me the open Gaelic
('tis an ill sign) ;
I hate a while in the company of friends,
their merriment tortures me ;
From the day I saw you dead on the sand,
the sun has not shone for me.

“ Alas, my grief ! what shall I do hence-
forth, the world wearing me.
Without your chalk-white little hand like a
breath through trees on my sombre
brow,
Your little mouth of honey like angels'
music in my ears
Saying to me gently, ' dear heart, poor
father, be not troubled ! '

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“ Ah, desolate ! I little thought in the time
of my hope
That this child would not be a swift valiant
hero in the midst of the band,
Doing deeds of daring and planning wisely
for the sake of Fódla,
But He who fashioned us of clay on earth not
so has ordered ! ”

That elegy is in line with the great elegies of the early Irish literature ; and I would place it with a poem in Roden Noel's “ Little Child's Monument,” and with Bridges' “ Lines on a Dead Child ” as the three modern poems of my acquaintance which most exquisitely associate the pity of death with the beauty of childhood.

When I said in the beginning that had Irish literature been rediscovered four centuries ago instead of Greek and Latin literature, modern letters might have received a nobler, because a more humane, inspiration than they did actually receive, what I meant to suggest was this : that the Irish chivalry and the Irish spirituality which would then have commenced to percolate the literatures of Europe was a finer thing than the spirit of the old classic

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literatures, more heroic, more gentle, more delicate and mystical. And it is remarkable that the most chivalrous inspiration in modern literature does in fact come from a Celtic source : that King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table have meant more to modern men than the heroes who warred at Troy or than Charlemagne and his Paladins. But how much richer might European literature have been had the story of Cuchulainn become a European possession ! For the story of Cuchulainn I take to be the finest epic stuff in the world : as we have it, it is not the most finely-finished epic, but it is, I repeat, the finest epic stuff. I mean not merely that Conor and Fergus and Conall and Cuchulainn are nobler figures, humaner figures, than Agamemnon and Hector and Ulysses and Achilles ; not merely that Macha and Meadhbh and Deirdre and Emer are more gracious figures, more appealing figures, than Hecuba and Helen ; I mean also that the story itself is greater than any Greek story, the tragedy as pitiful as any Greek tragedy, yet at the same time more joyous, more exultant. The theme is as great as Milton's in " Paradise Lost " : Milton's theme is a fall, but the Irish theme

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is a redemption. For the story of Cuchulainn symbolises the redemption of man by a sinless God. The curse of primal sin lies upon a people ; new and personal sin brings doom to their doors ; they are powerless to save themselves ; a youth, free from the curse, akin with them through his mother but through his father divine, redeems them by his valour ; and his own death comes from it. I do not mean that the Tain is a conscious allegory : but there is the story in its essence, and it is like a retelling (or is it a fore-telling ?) of the story of Calvary. Whether you agree with me or not, you will agree as to the greatness of the theme, stated thus in its essentials ; and you will no longer, I hope, think of the Tain as the tale of an ancient Cattle Drive.

In that glorious Anthology " The Bards of the Gael and Gall " Dr. Sigerson long ago pointed out that the story of Deirdre fell naturally into the five acts of a great tragic drama. Since then four dramatic poets, three in English, and one in Irish, have given us tragedies on the Deirdre story. But the whole Ulster epic falls just as naturally into a great trilogy of tragedies, with a prologue and an epilogue. The Prologue tells of the primal

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sin and the Curse of Macha ; the three great tragedies are, in order, Deirdre, the Tain, and the Death of Cuchulainn ; the Epilogue is the Death of Conor. Each of the great tragedies is complete in itself, yet through the whole cycle unrolls in inevitable sequence the doom of Ulster.

It may be said of the Homeric gods that they are too nearly akin to men, but of the Irish heroes that they have in them always something of the divine. The unseen powers have always been very close to Irish-speaking men. I have known old people who lived in familiar converse with the unseen ; who knew as it were by sight and by the sound of their voices Christ and Mary and many familiar saints. Now that intimacy with spiritual things is very characteristic of Irish literature. One finds it in the mystical hymns of the Middle Ages ; one finds it in the folk-tales of the Western countrysides ; one finds it in many exquisite folk-songs. As Mr. Colum has pointed out, Christ and Mary have been incorporated into the Gaelic clan ; and Irish peasant women can keen Christ dead with as real a grief as they keen their own dead. I have many times seen women sob as they

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repeated or listened to "The Keening of Mary." The strange intimacy that connects certain places in Ireland with the scenes of Christ's birth and life and death, and links certain Irish saints and heroes with the joy of the Nativity and the tragedy of the Passion—this is the true Irish mysticism, the mysticism which recognises no real dividing line between the seen and the unseen, and to which the imagined experience is often more vivid than the real experience. A people so gifted must bring in their turn a very precious gift to literature ; for is it not the function of literature by making known the real and imagined experiences of gifted souls to reveal to common men all the hidden splendours of the world and to make vocal its silent music ?

THREE LECTURES ON GAELIC
TOPICS

PREFACE

The three lectures or papers comprised in this little volume were not originally intended to see the light of publication. They were written, in every case, at a few days' notice, and at different periods during the last twelve months. Though I have revised them for publication, yet I have not, by any means made so many emendations as I would like, preferring to send them forth as nearly as possible in their original forms.

I hope no one will be so uncharitable as to imagine that I have published this booklet merely for the sake of seeing myself in print. My main object as a matter of fact has been to assist, in some little degree, in spreading the reputation of the Society of which I have the honour to be President, and before which the lectures were delivered.

As I am but a student of Irish myself—and young at that—I am aware that Gaelic scholars will find little that is new in these papers ; but it is not so much to the scholar they are addressed as to the barbarian—to him, that is,

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to whom our National language, with its wealth of poetry, romance, and folk-lore, is still a sealed book. The subjects of which the lectures treat are to-day far from being so new, or so out-of-the-way, as they would have been even a very few years ago ; for, thanks to the Gaelic League, to the *Oireachtas*, to the *Gaelic Journal*, and to “*ṙáinne an tAe*,” Irishmen are beginning to realize that they possess a language of their own, which, for antiquity, may vie with the languages of Homer and Virgil, and, for youthful vigour and literary capabilities, with the languages of Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe.

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I

A great deal, Mr. Chairman, has, within the last few years, been said and written about the ancient literature of the Gael. In Ireland, in Great Britain, and on the Continent, a small but earnest band of workers is engaged in opening up to the world the vast literary treasures of the Irish language. In spite of this, however, the melancholy fact remains, that, to most people, our literature—prose and poetry—is still a *terra incognita*; a region as dark and unexplored as the heart of Africa. Hence, as might naturally be expected, we constantly find two very different opinions expressed by two very different classes of people. First, we have the assertion of ignorant and self-important critics of the “up-to-date” school, that the literature existing in the Gaelic language is of an utterly worthless type—that it consists of a few odd songs written by disreputable and half-educated poets, and of certain crazy old tales about

* Read in March, 97.

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Fenians, giants, reptiles, and soforth. On the other hand, we have the far more pardonable and far less erroneous belief of enthusiastic Gaelic students, that the Irish language possesses the grandest, the most ancient, and the most extensive literature in the world. Now, the truth of the matter is simply this : there are, at the present day, several nations possessing a literature more extensive and possibly of a higher *absolute*, though certainly not of a higher *relative*, degree of excellence, than Gaelic literature ; but the statement is strictly and undeniably true that Ireland possesses a more ancient, a more extensive, and a better literature, *wholly of native growth*, than any other European country, with the single exception of Greece.

It is impossible, of course, to determine the precise date at which our forefathers first commenced to commit tales and poems to writing. We know that they possessed *some* books, at least, before the arrival of St. Patrick ; but it is highly probable that these were derived either from St. Patrick's predecessors in Ireland, or from communication, commercial or otherwise, with the Christians of the Continent. It is true that many of our existing romances are, in

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incidents and tone, completely pagan ; that these existed, in some shape or other, long before the time of St. Patrick is absolutely certain ; that they existed in a written form is, at least, possible. We may conclude, then, that Irish literature, using " literature " in the strict sense of the word, dates from the fourth or fifth century of the Christian era.

The way in which our early literature was produced and propagated is a remarkable one. Handed down by word of mouth for centuries, it was at length committed to writing—sometimes by the professional bards themselves, more frequently, perhaps, by the humbler scribes, lay and ecclesiastical. The service rendered to Gaelic literature by these latter is indeed immense : in the quiet shelter of great monastic establishments, or under the friendly protection of powerful chiefs, these old Gaelic scribes lived and died ; their cunning pens it was that illuminated the pages of our priceless manuscript-books, and that gave to the world the vast stores of Gaelic literature, which having survived the ravages of Dane, and Norman, and Cromwellian, are scattered to-day through the libraries of Europe, from the Liffey to the Tiber, from the Tiber to the Neva.

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Eire has long been celebrated as the "Land of Song." It is hence somewhat remarkable to find that prose has played a more important part in the early literature of Ireland than in that of any other country. Our great national epics—including, of course, the *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, which is recognized as emphatically *the* national epic—are all in prose.* There exists, then, in the Irish language, a most valuable, a most extensive, and a most unique prose literature. It is in this *uniqueness*, indeed, that the chief charm of Gaelic prose lies. There is absolutely nothing like it in the world's literature. When the student enters its wide realms he finds himself in a new world, surrounded by a new atmosphere, new characters, new incidents, new modes of thought. The nearest approach to our older romance-literature is perhaps to be found in those splendid old sages of the Nordland, which are lately becoming so popular amongst English scholars. It is well known, indeed, that some of the Scandinavian epics are directly borrowed from our Gaelic epics—style, characters, incidents, and all.

Speaking very broadly, Gaelic prose may be

* It is probable, however, that they were *originally* in poetry.

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divided into two great chronological divisions. The former, extending up to the sixteenth century, a period of over a thousand years, was the reign of the bards—and a long, glorious and prolific reign it was ; the latter, which includes the last three centuries, is a period of decline, fall, and finally, of resurrection.

The former of these two divisions should properly be sub-divided into two, ancient and mediæval. The former would embrace a period extending from the fifth century to the twelfth the latter from the twelfth to the sixteenth. The prose styles of these two periods are very different : that of the former is severe, unadorned, unencumbered by unnecessary words ; the latter, on the contrary is marked by a ponderous, ornate, multi-adjectival style, often extremely interesting, but sometimes degenerating into bombast.

For the purpose of this lecture I shall consider these two divisions as one, the later being, as a matter of fact, merely the developed form of the earlier.

It is to this period then—the reign of the bards, as I call it—that I shall almost entirely confine my attention. The amount of literature which was produced during this thousand

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years or so is simply incredible ; by far the greater part of it has perished, but there still remains enough to fill some 1,400 printed volumes, and to keep the Celtic scholars of Europe busied in editing and publishing it for the next two centuries. Yet, in the face of these facts, we frequently hear educated Irishmen assert that the Irish language has produced no literature ! “ *O tempora ! O Mores !* ”

This enormous mass of prose may again be sub-divided into numerous classes : history, biography, historic-romance, and fiction, or romance undiluted. The first of these divisions however, can scarcely come under the head of “ literature,” being, for the most part, mere annals, or compilations of dates and facts ; the second, that of biography, is mostly of a hagiological kind : it deals, that is, with the lives of the early Irish saints, and though most valuable and interesting in itself, and frequently of a high degree of literary excellence, it has not the claims to popularity amongst general readers that the latter two classes have.

We now come to the romantic prose literature of Ireland, part of it a mixture of genuine history and fiction, much of it, no doubt,

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fiction pure and simple. There is no literary production of any age or nation so entrancing, and, if I might use the word, so *refreshing*, so *bracing*, as these romantic prose-works ; they have an atmosphere of old-world quaintness and freshness about them, they are pervaded by a poetic magic and glamour peculiarly their own ; the poet, or the scholar, or the antiquarian, finds in them a wealth of beauty of imagination, of historic lore, which he can find nowhere else. Yet, in spite of all this, there is almost a universal opinion—which exists even amongst lovers of the language—that Gaelic romantic prose is of the driest and most uninteresting character. How this absurd misconception has grown up, and holds ground I am positively unable to conceive—unless, indeed, it be due to the nature of the works generally selected as text-books, or to the bad and unreadable translations which editors of such works conceive themselves bound to make.*

* Absolutely the best living translator of romantic Gaelic prose is Rev. Dr. Hogan, S.J. His translation of *Cath Rois na Riogh* is scholarly, accurate, and withal a splendid piece of English prose. The fault of most

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Our historic-romantic literature deals with many personages and events, but the larger part of it can be grouped into three great cycles: the mythological cycle, the early heroic cycle (which centres round Cúchulainn and the knights of the Craobh Ruadh), and the later heroic cycle (which circles round Fionn, the son of Cumhal, and the Fianna Eireann). Some of the tales, at least as we have them at present, are mere fragments; most of them, however, are sagas of considerable, indeed, sometimes of almost appalling length. In the later romances we find the very first examples of that form of literature which exerts such a potent influence to-day—the novel. The *Toruiigheacht Dhiarmuda agus Ghráinne*, is neither more nor less than a novel—a novel with a regular and most artfully-contrived, yet perfectly natural, plot. It is, as a matter of fact, one of the greatest and one of the most interesting historical novels ever written.

translations from the Gaelic is that they are too literal; the spirit of a work *cannot* be preserved in a word-for-word translation. Who would think of putting into the hands of a student a word-for-word translation of, say, a Greek or Latin classic or of a modern French or German work?

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Of the three cycles, the mythological is, of course, the oldest ; whilst the second or Red-Branch cycle is the finest from a literary point of view. As the three, however, as far as style and incidents are concerned, are perfectly similar, it will be sufficient for me to make a few general remarks on their character, illustrating by one or two extracts.

The first point that strikes the reader of Gaelic prose, and particularly of this special kind, is its wonderful descriptive power. Irish, from its copiousness and expressiveness, is, perhaps, better adapted for description than any other language. It is especially rich in beautiful and sonorous epithets, and many of these are so delicately shaded in meaning that, though their signification and application are perfectly clear in Irish, yet they must frequently be rendered by the same word in English.* It is by piling up such epithets as these that the really marvellous descriptive effect I have alluded to is obtained.

* There are many Irish words which absolutely defy translation into English : Miss Norma Borthwick (" Δοὸ Ruad̃,") in her prize essay in Gaelic at the recent Oir-eachtas instances, amongst others, " ῥῑαιτεῖμαι," and " ἑρῑτῑν."

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There are two scenes in the description of which our old storytellers particularly excel, and they are constantly recurring in our romantic literature—a battle and a sea voyage. To select the most suitable specimen of a battle piece where there is so large a field of choice is somewhat difficult. I shall begin, however, with the *Táin Bó Cuailgne* itself—one of the oldest, and certainly the finest and most important of the epic-romances of the Red-Branch cycle. Here is Sullivan's translation of a portion of the "Fight at the Ford" between Cúchluainn and his friend Ferdiad :—

" So close was the fight they made now that their heads met above and their feet below and their arms in the middle over the rims and bosses of their shields. So close was the fight they made that they cleft and loosened their shields from their rims to their centres. So close was the fight which they made that they turned and bent and shivered their spears from their joints to their hafts ! Such was the closeness of the fight which they made that the Bocanachs and Bananachs and wild people of the glens and demons of the air screamed from the rims of their shields, and from the

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hilts of their swords, and from the hafts of their spears. Such was the closeness of the fight which they made that they cast the river out of its bed and out of its course, so that it might have been a reclining and reposing couch for a king or for a queen in the middle of the ford, so that there was not a drop of water in it unless it dropped into it by the trampling and the hewing which the two champions and the two heroes made in the middle of the ford. Such was the intensity of the fight which they made that the stud of the Gaels darted away in fright and shyness, with fury and madness, breaking their chains and their yokes, their ropes and their traces, and that the women and youths and small people and camp-followers, and non-combatants of the men of Eire broke out of the camp southwestwards."

Here is another description of a single fight translated by Father Hogan from the *Cath Rois na Riogh*, or "Battle of Rosnaree." This battle was fought on the Boyne about the first year of the Christian era, and the saga describing it is, both in its older and more modern forms, quite pre-Christian in tone and texture.

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Cúchulainn had been inflicting heavy slaughter on the men of Leinster, or, as a Gaelic bard would put it in euphemistic-poetic language, *he had been playing the music of his sword on them*, when he approached the ring of battle in which he saw the diadem of the high-king, Cairbre Nia Fear himself: after an interchange of defiances:—

“Those two smote each other, and each of them inflicted abundance of wounds on his opponent, and they plied furious, angry, truly grim, effort-strong strife against each other, and they quickened hands to smite fiercely and feet to hold firm against the oncome of the fight and of mutual wounding. Howbeit, stout were the strokes and fierce the live-wounds, strong were the good thrusts, earnest was the hard fighting, and stern were the hearts, for it was a smiting of two brave champions, it was a lacerating of two lions, it was a madness of two bears; two bulls on a mound and two steers on a ridge were they at that time.”

There is a vigorous description of a general conflict in the Fenian saga, the *Cath Finn-*

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trágha, in some respects one of the finest, though not one of the most ancient of our historic-romantic tales. The following is a close translation of portion of it :—

“ Thereafter those two equally eager and equally keen armies poured forth against each other, like dense woods, with their proud noisy strokes, and spilling a black deluge, actively, fiercely, perilously, angrily, furiously, destructively, boldly, vehemently, hastily; and great was the grating of swords against bones, and the cracking of bones that were crushed, and bodies that were mangled, and eyes that were blinded, and arms that were shortened to the back, and mother without son, and fair wife without mate. Then the beings of the upper regions responded to the battle, telling the evil and the woe that was destined to be done on that day, and the sea chattered telling the losses, and the waves raised a heavy woeful great moan in wailing them, and the beasts howled telling of them in their bestial way, and the rough hills creaked with the danger of that attack, and the woods trembled in wailing the heroes, and the grey stones cried from the deeds of the champions, and the

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winds sighed telling the high deeds, and the earth trembled prophesying the heavy slaughter, and the sun was covered with a blue mantle from the cries of the grey hosts, and the clouds were shining black at the time of that hour, and the hounds and whelps, and crows and the demoniac women of the glen, and the spectres of the air, and the wolves of the forest howled together from every quarter and every corner round about them, and a demoniacal devilish section of the race of tempters to evil and wrong kept urging them on against each other."

The description of a field of battle has always been a favourite theme with poets, and many is the example of such a description we have, from the battle-scenes of the Prince of Poets, down to Tennyson's splendid lay, "The Charge of the Light Brigade." But it is no exaggeration to say that no great writer, either in prose or poetry, has succeeded in painting a more *vivid*, a more *realistic* picture of a battle-scene than the pictures of the unknown writers of these passages. It should be noticed that most writers describe only the bright side of a battle : they paint its " pride, pomp, and circumstance,"

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but they leave out all mention of its more disagreeable details. Gaelic writers on the contrary, are admirably true to nature: they describe the glory of a battle-field with the greatest enthusiasm, but they also depict its horror. We hear not alone the wild, inspiring slogan and the ringing cheer of victory, but also the agonized shriek of the wounded, and the fearful moan of the dying; not alone the clang of steel on shield and hauberk, but the thud of the fallen champion, and the crushing of his limbs beneath the rush of feet. I would have no hesitation whatever in placing some of these passages, for realistic effect, beside any passage not merely of Scott, Macauley, or Tennyson, but of Homer himself. I purposely compare this descriptive prose with the descriptive *poetry* of other nations; for, though nominally prose, it is, in reality, poetry. It may be accurately described as poetical prose, or prose-poetry.

The Gael being notoriously a non-seafaring race, it is rather striking that one of the great fortes of Gaelic writers should lie in the description of the changing moods of the ocean. This remarkable circumstance is probably to be explained by that innate love of nature

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which is so peculiarly Celtic. Everyone must have noticed how in the extracts I have read the Celtic nature-love, and the Celtic belief in nature's influence over, and sympathy with, man so frequently appear. Almost all the similes of a Gaelic writer are drawn from nature, and particularly from the phenomena connected with the ocean. In the "Battle of Moyrath," for instance, we are told that on the conveying of certain news to him "the stern steadfast heart of Conall started from the mid-upper part of his chest like the noise of a sea-green wave against the earth." In the "Battle of Ventry," it is said of two warriors as they fought that one would think that the "bank overflowing, white-foaming curled wave of Cliodhna, and the long-sided steady wave of Tuagh, and the great right-courageous wave of Rudhraighe had arisen to smother one another." In the "Battle of Rosnaree" the march to battle of the men of Ulster is described as "like the tide of a strong torrent belching through the top of a rugged mountain, so that it bruises and breaks what there is of stones and of trees before it." In the "Pursuit of the *Giolla Deacair*" Diarmuid's rush on his foes "under them, over them, and through them" is

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compared to that of "hawk through flight of small birds, or wolf through sheep-flock," or to "the weighty rush of a mad swollen stream in spate that over and adown a cliff of ocean spouts."

When we consider this intense love of nature which characterizes the Celt, we cannot wonder that Gaelic writers should especially delight in describing a thing so vast, so powerful, and so mysterious as the ocean. Here is Mr. O'Grady's translation of the description in *Tadhg Mac Céin* of the sailing of Tadhg and his companions :—

"Forth on the vast illimitable abyss they drive their vessel accordingly over the volume of the potent and tremendous deluge, till at last neither ahead of them nor astern could they see land at all, but only colossal ocean's superfaces. Further on they heard about them concert of multifarious unknown birds, and hoarse booming of the main ; salmons irridescent, white bellied, throwing themselves all around the *currach* ; in their wake, huge bull-seals thick and dark, that ever cleft the flashing wash of the oars as they pursued them, and following these again great whales of the

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deep. So that for the prodigiousness of their motion, fashion, and variety, the young men found it a festive thing to scrutinize and watch them all, for hitherto they had not used to see the diverse oceanic reptiles, the bulky marine monsters.”

Here is a description of a storm, taken from the *Cath Finntrágha* :—

“ Then arose the winds, and grew high the waves, so that they heard nothing but the furious mad sporting of the mermaids, and the many crazy voices of the hovering terrified birds above the pure green waters that were in uproar. There was no welcome forsooth, to him who got the service and attendance of that angry, cold, and deep sea, with the force of the waves, and of the tide, and of the strong blasts ; nor was the babbling of those watery tribes pleasant with the creaking of the ropes that were lashed into strings, and with the buffeting of the masts by the fierce winds that shivered them severely.”

The extraordinary fertility of language displayed in all these descriptive passages is one of their chief characteristics. Gaelic writers

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delight in heaping up epithet on epithet, comparison on comparison. These epithets and comparisons exhibit the greatness boldness and vigour, and sometimes they almost startle one with their peculiar vehemence ; but they are always, above all things, appropriate, and convey to the reader's mind a most vivid—in some cases an almost too vivid—picture of what the author is describing. These writers have all a vast range of vocabulary, and it is no uncommon thing to find twenty or thirty adjectives, all of different meaning, but all most applicable, qualifying the same noun. These strings of adjectives are introduced chiefly for the sake of alliteration, which is as prominent a feature of Gaelic prose as it is of Gaelic poetry. All the passages I have quoted are, in the original Irish, full of alliteration and similar effects. Now, this brings home two facts to us : first, the extraordinary plasticity of the language which allows all this, and, secondly, the prodigious amount of labour and pains which must have been bestowed by the authors on these passages.*

* The labour required to produce an effective alliterative passage in Irish is, however, by no means so great as we might imagine. Modern English, as everyone knows does not at all lend itself to alliteration with the facility

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Gaelic prose-works are emphatically, and in the fullest sense of the words, works of art,—art the most wonderful, the most consummate and the most finished.

Whilst admiring these alliterative “ runs ” and descriptive passages, as such, we cannot but admit that their perpetual recurrence is an abuse. The inflated style which marks our romantic tales from the twelfth century onwards stands alone in literature. It is not found in our oldest romances, and there is nothing like it, as far as I am aware, in any other European literature. How it was introduced into Gaelic prose is, however, by no means difficult to conceive. We must never forget that our prose epics were originally intended not to be written, but to be *recited*. The bards, of course, did not learn them off *in extenso* ; indeed no human being—not even an Irish bard—could possibly learn by heart three

of Irish. When we attempt to form a continuous alliterative sentence in English we almost always produce nonsense of the “ four fat friars fanning fainting flies ” type. The genius of Irish, on the contrary, peculiarly fits it for alliteration. I have frequently heard Irish speakers produce fine alliterative sentences quite unconsciously, and we know that Gaelic poets, even of the second or third rank, can dash off alliterative stanzas extemporarily.

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hundred and fifty prose tales of such length as the great majority of our romances. In all probability the bard learned only the *outline* or *skeleton* of each story, and this outline he filled in extemporarily with his own words whilst in the act of reciting. We can easily conceive how a bard possessing an enormous command over language would revel in rolling forth to his astonished hearers a long list of alliterative adjectives and compound words. Afterwards, when the tales came to be written down, this turgid style was not unnaturally retained ; and succeeding writers imitated, and even outdid the extravagance of the bardic language. This is why the later romance is the more turgid and ornamental, as a rule, in its style. Any attempt to revive this inflated style in modern Irish prose would, of course, be absurd. Such a sentence, for instance, as “ Wrathful, horrid, wrathful-gloomy, ungentle, very-angry, unfriendly, was the keen angry, very fiery look that each of them cast on the other from the flashing of the intent-ruinous eyes, under the soft brinks of the frowning, wrinkled cluster-brows ” (which occurs in the *Cath Rois na Riogh*,) might be very effective when thundered forth by a bard

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to an audience of chiefs and gallowglasses, but in a modern composition it would be intolerable.

When this fondness for adjectival ornamentation is kept in restraint nothing can surpass our mediæval romantic tales in simple dignity of style. All the declamation on earth would fail to produce the touching effect of the old storyteller's description of the death of the children of Tuireann* :—

“ When Brian heard that he went back to where his two brothers were, and he lay down between them ; and his soul went forth from him and from his two brothers at the same time.”

Equally touching is the death of Tuireann himself :—

“ After that lay, Tuireann fell on his children, and his soul went from him ; and they were buried immediately in the same grave. ”

For simplicity and pathos I have never read a passage equal to these, unless, perhaps, it be

* The chaste simplicity which distinguishes the “ Fate of the Children of Tuireann ” is admirably preserved throughout Mr. O'Duffy's translation.

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the description of the death of Diarmuid in the
“Pursuit of Diarmuid and Gráinne.”

The *purely* fictitious prose tales found in our manuscripts are almost always of a humorous nature. Commenting on this Tomás ó Flannagáille has the following very trenchant remarks :—

“It has been sometimes asserted—by those who knew nothing about the subject—that the ancient and mediæval Irish *had no humour*! the inference being, we suppose, that we only acquired that faculty after we had been brought into close connection with the intensely humorous English people, and had learned their language—the doings of that people in Ireland during the last three hundred years being especially humorous and playful, and so highly adapted to develop in us a playful and light-hearted disposition! As a matter of fact, however, half of the modern so-called ‘Irish humour’ is nothing but a caricature of the Irishman’s manners or a burlesque of his English dialect. Unfortunately, it is not Englishmen only who find such things immensely funny—many of our own countrymen, too, consider them prime subjects for ridicule. The more English some of us are the more we

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think we are entitled to make game of those who are less English but more Irish ; for your Cork man laughs at the Kerry man, the Carlow man at the Cork man, the Dublin man at the Carlow man, and the Saxon at us all."

As a specimen of genuine Gaelic humorous prose Mr. O'Flannghaile quotes a tale from the introduction to *Silva Gadelica* ; it is translated from an Irish manuscript in the British Museum—

" Three penitents resolved to quit the world for the ascetic life, and so sought the wilderness. After exactly a year's silence the first said, ' 'Tis a good life we lead.' At the next year's end the second answered, ' It is so.' Another year being run out, the third exclaimed, ' If I cannot have peace and quite here I'll go back to the world ! ' "

A Munster folk-tale very similar to this is quoted by Mr. O'Flannghaile from the *Gaelic Journal* for August, 1894 :—

" The hero of it was *Michael na Buile*, ' Michael of the Madness,' or ' Mad Mick.' Now, there is a beautiful valley in Kerry, some

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miles to the West of Tralee, and it is called ' *Gleann na nGealt*,' or Madmen's Glen,' and thither the crazy used to resort to drink its wholesome waters and to eat its cresses. So Mad Mick went to try the waters and the cresses, and to get rest for his poor head. One day a stray cow found her way into the glen, and her lowing might be heard for miles around, but though the glen was full of madmen no one spoke. But at the end of seven years, an old man more acute of hearing than the rest cries out, ' Is that a cow I heard ? ' Seven years after this a young man answering cries, ' Where did you hear her ? ' And now, at the end of another seven years, Mick, unable to stand the noisy conversation any longer, cried out, ' The glen is bothered with ye ! ' And then Mad Mick quitted *Gleann na nGealt*, bothered entirely with the noise and brawling of that same glen."

The powers of description to which I have alluded in connection with the heroic tales are quite as evident in the humorous ones. The following, for example, is Mr. O'Grady's translation of the description of the *Giolla Deacair* and his steed. Owing to the translator's mannerisms

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it is not, perhaps, quite so racy as it might be.* A Fiann had been placed on guard by Fionn :—

“ Nor had he been long so when out of the eastern *airt* directly he marked draw towards him a ruffian, virile indeed, but right ugly, a creature devilish and misshapen, a grumpy-looking and ill favoured loon, equipped as thus : a shield that on the convex was black and loathly-coloured, gloomy, hung on his

* Mr. O'Grady constantly goes out of his way to find some odd-looking English word or phrase to translate a quite simple Irish expression. “ *Buailios do phreib é,*” for instance, he renders, “ *impinges* upon him with a kick ;” “ *ocus do bhrised cos eich eile,*” he elaborately translates, “ and yet another's legs would fracture with a kick.” This stilted style of translation is calculated to give the barbarian quite a false notion of Irish prose. There is, however, no doubt about the fact that “ *Silva Gadelica*” is one of the monumental books of the century. In his “ *Teanga Thioramuit na hÉireann,*” Mr. O'Neill Russell expresses the regret that the language of the tale is not easier to be understood by those who have not had opportunity and time to study our older literature. This is scarcely to the point, for Mr. O'Grady's object in “ *Silva Gadelica*” is to give some idea, not of modern but of *mediæval* Irish prose. And, after all, the language of the tales is not so very difficult ; an ordinary reader of Irish can certainly understand it as easily as an ordinary reader of English can understand the language of the *Faerie Queene*.

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back's expanse ; upon his dingy, grimy left thigh, all distorted, was a wide-grooved and clean-striking sword ; struck up his shoulders he had two long javelins, broad in the head, which, for a length of time before, he had not raised in fight or *melée* ; over his armature and harness was thrown a mantle of a limp texture, whilst every limb of him was blacker than a smith's coal quenched in cold ice-water. A sulky, cross-built horse was there, gaunt in the carcase, with skimpy grey hind-quarters shambling upon weedy legs, and wearing a rude iron halter. This beast his master towed behind him, and how he failed to drag the head from the neck, and this from the attenuated body, was a wonder, such plucks he communicated to the rusty iron halter, and sought thus to knock some travel or progression out of his nag. But a greater marvel yet than this it was that the latter missed of wrenching from his owner's corporal barrel the thick, long arms of the big man : such the sudden stands and stops he made against him, and the jibbing. In the meantime, even as the thunder of some vast, mighty surf was the resonance of each ponderously lusty, vigorous whack, that with an iron cudgel, the big man laid well into the

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horse, endeavouring, as we have said, thus to get some travel or progression out of him."

This strange cavalier came to the presence of Fionn and, after some altercation with Conán *Maol*, or "Bald Conán," he asked and obtained leave to let his horse loose. "The big man," pursues the storyteller, "pulls the rough iron halter which was round the horse's head, and the creature started off, rushing with mighty swift strides till it reached the Fianna's horse-troop," which, it seems, "he began to lacerate and kill promptly; with a bite he would whip out the eye of one of them, with a snap he would snip off the ear of the second, and yet another's legs would fracture with a kick." The Fianna, of course, were scarcely disposed to stand this. "Take thy horse out of that, O big man!" cried Conán. "I swear by the divisions of heaven and earth that, had it not been on the security of Fionn and the Fianna thou hast let him free, I would dash his brains out." "I swear by the divisions of heaven and earth," said the big man, "that take him out of that I never will." Conán himself then succeeded in recapturing the animal, and, on Fionn's advice, he mounted him in order to

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gallop him to death over hills and hollows. But, in spite of all Conán's endeavours, the animal obstinately refused to stir. Fionn was thereupon struck with the idea that it would be necessary to place on the steed's back the number of men that would weigh exactly as much as his master. So no less than thirteen men mounted behind Conán, and the horse, curiously enough, lay down under them and got up again. The *Giolla Deacair*, not relishing the treatment his faithful nag received, after reciting a lay to Fionn, "weakly and wearily" departed; but when he had reached the top of a hill, he grit up his coat tails, "and away with him with the speed of a swallow or a roe-deer, or like a vociferous March wind on the ridge of a mountain." When the horse saw this, he immediately started after master, with Conán and the thirteen men on his back. Fionn and the Fianna "guffawed with a shout of mockery flouting Conán," who "screamed and screeched for help." Ultimately, however, the Fianna deemed it advisable to start in pursuit, and they followed the steed over hill and glen till they reached sea; here, one of them succeeded in catching the steed by the tail, but he, Conán, and the thirteen men were dragged

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into the sea, and the Fianna had to pass through many a marvellous adventure before they recovered them again. I would advise everyone that possibly can to read this truly splendid tale in the original.

In these stories we find, as the critic already quoted says, "the true Irish extravagance, the true Irish love of the incongruous—the genuine article, independent of brogue or burlesque." It is in this love of the fantastic, or incongruous, that Celtic humour peculiarly consists. The Celt is famous throughout the world for his wit ; but it is in humour that he is pre-eminent. And Celtic humour, be it remarked, though sometimes broad enough is, as a rule, of an exceedingly subtle and delicate kind. so that it is not everyone who can appreciate it.

What an extraordinary and melancholy fact it is that we do not know the authors of any of the works we have been considering. They exist, splendid, beautiful, and unique ; they have come down to us, almost the only thing that remains of our glorious past ; but the oft-repeated question "Who wrote them ?" is a question no man can answer. Powerful and judicious must have been the minds that conceived these grand old tales, skilful must have

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been the hands that wrote them. But their authors have long since been mouldering in the quiet obscurity of ruined abbeys, and history records not their names. These men wrote not for gain, they wrote not even for the nobler reward of glory, but they wrote out of pure and spontaneous love for literature itself. What a mighty race they were, those Gaelic bards of old ! Honour to their memory ! Oblivion has hitherto been their portion ; but they have one consolation, for, though their names have been forgotten, their works, which are their second and greater selves, will live on through the ages.

I had intended, Mr. Chairman, to make a few remarks on the works and style of the more modern writers of Gaelic prose, especially of Brother Michael O'Clery and of Geoffrey Keating. At the end of a paper like this, however, I would not have time to do them justice, and consequently shall not attempt to do so. I need only remark that to the ordinary reader who reads for amusement rather than for instruction, modern Gaelic prose is by no means so interesting as mediæval ; whilst it is not nearly so extensive. This is easily explained. The several conquests and re-conquests of Ire-

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land, from the time of the Reformation to that of the Revolution, completely swept away the old order of things. Defeat, conquest, and persecution did not, indeed, silence the Gaelic muse, for we know that much of our sweetest Gaelic poetry was written, or rather composed, for some of it has never been written, during the seventeenth and following centuries ; but with prose the case was naturally very different. A good education, leisure, access to libraries, are necessary for the composition of great prose works ; and these were not to be had. When the power of the native chieftains had been broken, and the monasteries had been swept away by the Reformation, the occupation and the *raison d' être* of the bard were gone ; and so that noble line of storytellers, that had been held in honour by the Gael for two thousand years, disappeared from the land.

A few words should certainly be said about Irish prose, as written at the present day. Of course, the work that modern Gaelic scholars are engaged in doing is mainly one of revival ; it consists, for the most part, not in original work, but in editing, translating and annotating existing texts. There is growing up, however, in the ranks of the Gaelic League, a school of

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modern Gaelic writers ; and their work may be seen, month by month, in the columns of the *Gaelic Journal*. A modern Gaelic prose style is being formed, and, when developed, it will combine, let us hope, the purity and elegance of Keating, with the nature-love and imagination-play of the mediæval romances.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, it may be asked what are the future prospects of Gaelic prose literature ? Is this glorious literature a thing of the past ?—a thing on which we may look back with pride indeed, but which is now utterly and irretrievably gone ? Or, can it be that it yet has a future before it ?—that the day will yet come when the bard and the *seanchaidh* will once more hold a honoured place in Eire, when the world will listen in amazement, as it did of yore, to the immortal *sgéalta* of the Gaelic race ? Personally, Mr. Chairman, I am convinced that this day will come ; and that it will come is the firm belief of thousands to-day. We will be met, of course, with the stereotyped objection that the men who say and think these things are enthusiasts ; this is perhaps, true ; but it would be well to recollect that every great movement that has ever been

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carried out on this earth has been carried out simply and solely by enthusiasts.

Centuries ago, when the European civilization and literature of to-day were unknown, Eire had her day of empire ; but hers was the empire, not of brute force, but of intellectuality. Time was when this land of ours was the literary centre of Christendom, when the learned of the world found their chief reading in these very prose tales that we have been considering. Gaelic literature, like the Gaelic race, has long been dying, but it is " fated not to die." When we remember the past, and when we look into the future, we are driven to admit, laying all enthusiasm aside, or, at least, avoiding extravagance in our enthusiasm, that in centuries yet to come these self-same old epics, these self-same old *sgéalta*, with their simple and beautiful imagery, with their grand and sonorous descriptive passages, with their strange old-world Celtic eloquence, may still be inspiring and rejuvenating the heart of man, and lifting him to higher and nobler ideals.

THE FOLK-SONGS OF IRELAND *

II

I have called this paper "The Folk-Songs of Ireland," Mr. Chairman, simply because I was unable to think of any better title. I fear, however, that the name is calculated to give a false impression of what I really intend to do. Even had I had full materials at hand, which unfortunately, I had not, it would be impossible within the limits of a paper like this, to treat in anything like an adequate manner a subject so vast and so important as the folk-songs of

* Read in January, '98. In its original form this paper was considerably longer, as I quoted in full many of the best examples of living Gaelic folk-songs. As most of these, however, are to be found in Dr. Hyde's " *Δὐράδιον Ἰρλανδίου* *Chúige Connacht*," it is unnecessary to print them here. I would advise anyone whom the somewhat desultory remarks contained in the following paper may succeed in interesting in the subject to fly at once to the pages of Dr. Hyde.

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Ireland. I do not propose, then, to trace in detail, the history of the folk-song, entering into an elaborate discussion as to its origin and antiquity ; nor do I propose to make an exhaustive classification and analysis of the Gaelic folk-songs existing at the present day. Such a task would, indeed, be quite beyond me ; and I shall have to content myself with making a few rapid and tentative remarks, of a more or less general nature, in the hope of interesting the members of the Society in a species of unwritten literature—the expression, though a bull, may be allowed on account of its handiness—which may not, perhaps, up to the present have received from us that attention which it deserves.

It is in the highest degree probable that every form of literature which we have at the present day has sprung from the folk-tale and the folk-song. These two were, to a by-gone age, all that the press, the novel, and the drama are to ours. Co-æval with man himself, they are, so to speak, the two elemental forms of literature. It is impossible to conceive a state of society in which they did not exist : since man first trod this earth to the present moment, he has loved to wander in the land of fancy opened up

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by the folk-tale, and to pour forth in song the emotions of his soul.

Most of our great authorities incline to the belief that the folk-tale originated in an attempt on the part of primitive man to bring home more strongly to himself, or, as one might put it, to represent pictorially to himself, the phenomena of nature. The folk-song also, I conceive, owes its existence to the influence of nature on man. We moderns, who live in an atmosphere which we studiously endeavour to render as unnatural as possible, can scarcely form an idea of what nature means to the savage—and the savage, let us remember, is the man as God made him. Living in constant contact and communication with nature, its beauties and potencies stir him with feelings unknown to us. Nature is all in all to him—his friend, his life, his god. Hence, just as primitive man attempted, in the folk-tale, to allegorize in a simple form the phenomena and objects of nature—representing the cloud as the boat that sails over land and sea, the sun as the giant that drinks up lakes and strands fish and boats, the rainbow as the man that jumps a hundred miles, the blade of grass as a “ slender green man ”—so, in the folk-song, did he endeavour to give expression to the bounding joy

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of his heart at the glorious sounds and sights of nature—the delight with which he listened to the bird-song, the mystic fascination with which he heard the wind-moan, and the streamlet-laugh, the awe with which he gazed on the mighty sea and the sombre mountain. The song, then, was originally man's hymn of praise to nature, and, through nature, to God.

If this theory be true we should expect to find that the earliest songs of every nation are nature-hymns. This is exactly what we do find. The songs of those nations which are to-day in a state somewhat similar to that of our ancestors three thousand years ago, are all expressions either of praise or of fear, to the forces of nature, these being very frequently represented as divinities. The earliest songs of our own race have, of course, been lost, or, at least, have come down to us in forms which it is now impossible to recognize. But going back as far as we possibly can, we discover that the oldest lines of poetry extant in any vernacular European tongue, with the exception of Greek, are those three strange but beautiful pieces attributed to Amergin, son of Milidh—traditionally represented as the first verses ever sung in Eire.

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Here is how Dr. Sigerson translates the first few lines of Amergin's "Triumph-Song":—

" I, the Wind at sea,
I, the roaring Billow,
I, the roar of Ocean,
I, the seven Cohorts,
I, the Ox upholding,
I, the rock-borne Osprey,
I, the flash of Lightning,
I, the Ray in Mazes."

" This poem," says Dr. Hyde, " is noticeable for its curious pantheistic strain which reminds one strangely of the East." Pantheistic or not, it is instinct with the nature-spirit so characteristic of the early productions of every race. I quote it not, of course, as a folk-song, but as an instance of the part in which nature-worship has played in the genesis of Gaelic poetry.

It may be urged by those who are acquainted with the Gaelic folk-songs of the present day that comparatively few of them can be described as nature songs. This is, no doubt, true. We rarely find a Donegal fisherman singing an " Ode to the West Wind," or a Connemara labourer, an " Address to the Daisy." But, is it not quite possible that many songs which are

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now love songs pure and simple were once nature-songs? The folk-memory is, as everyone knows, wonderfully retentive and conservative. Yet, we find that, while a folk-tale itself may be preserved for two thousand years—and preserved without any radical change in incidents or detail even to the very word-formulæ and nonsense-ending—yet the origin and meaning of the tale have been forgotten. The Mayo peasant, for instance, who relates the story of Páidín drinking up the lake,* no more dreams that Páidín is, in all probability, a solar-myth, than he does that his own grandfather sleeping in the church-yard hard-by is one. In the same way, whilst the ideas and words of a folk-song may be preserved, its meaning and origin may, in many cases, have been completely lost.

In quite recent times we find a striking example of such a process,—a case in which the meaning and origin, not of a single song, but of a whole class of songs, have been forgotten, though the songs themselves, which include some of the finest in the language, are popular all over Gaelic-speaking Ireland to-day. The eighteenth century poets almost always referred

* See “*An Sgeuluidhe Gaodhalach*,” *Cuid I*.

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to Ireland under some allegorical name,—and very beautiful these allegorical names are. “Róirín Dub,” “Sígle ní Sárda,” “Caitilín ní Uallacháin,”—these and many more were originally patriotic or political songs, but are now sung as love-songs. The “Páirtín Píonn” too, is considered by Hardiman to represent the son of James II.—thus forming one of the most remarkable instances on record of a song’s having lost its meaning, the “Páirtín Píonn,” being now treated as a *girl*. What has happened in the case of this particular class of song may very well have happened in the case of many more.

It is true, of course, that most of the Gaelic folk-songs current to-day, are, in their present forms at least, not more than one or two centuries old. But the antiquity of existing folk-songs is often much greater than would at first sight appear. We may, for instance, come across a Munster song, which from its language and style, and from the political or other allusions which it may contain, we may be inclined to set down as, say, one hundred and fifty years old. We may then fall in with a Connacht version of the same song, and soon after with an Ulster version, both of about the same date as

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the Munster song. Now, when we find three distinct versions of a folk-song, each belonging to a different province, and the three of approximately the same date, we must necessarily conclude that all three versions have come from a common root,—a folk-song, that is, belonging to some date at least a century or two earlier than that of the three existing versions. We thus see that the language of a folk-song forms a very far from infallible guide to its antiquity ; and it is quite possible that many of our best-known and most modern-looking songs are some centuries older than they appear.

Further than this, however, it is highly probable that there exist a small number of folk-songs which are of the very highest antiquity. We know that the greater number of our folk-tales are of comparatively modern date,—either accounts, more or less embellished with imagination, of events which have actually occurred among the peasantry, or else pure and simple inventions of the folk-fancy ; but we know also that there are a number of old tales,—including those which contains traces of nature-myths,—which have been handed down by word of mouth for two or three thousand years. Now, there is no reason in the world

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that what is true of the folk-tale should not also be true of the folk-song. Most of those current to-day are, as has been said, of comparatively recent date ; but, reasoning from analogy, nothing is more probable than that there is many a folk-song sung to-day around the turf fire of a Munster cabin, or on the bare side of a Connacht mountain, which has been sung by generation after generation since the Gael first set foot in Eire.

Let us turn, however, from dry theorizing to the warm living folk-songs themselves. Here, at any rate, we are on firm ground. The question of their age and origin, interesting as it undoubtedly is, is, after all, but of secondary importance : be they centuries old, or be they but of yesterday, they are here, and they speak for themselves. Had the Gaelic race never produced a scrap of literature—had our treasures of history and romance never had a being, had our Cormacs, and our O'Clerys, and our Keatings, and our Donnchadh Ruadhs, never written a line—these folk-songs of ours would still have been sufficient to prove for all time the glorious capabilities of our race. Let the scoffer scoff as he wills—let the up-to-date young Irishman fresh from the “ National’

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School, or from the still worse, and still more un-Irish Intermediate *regime*, sneer as he, and he only, *can* sneer, let him solace his soul with the London Music-hall song, and the pantomime ballad—but the fact remains that these folk-songs exist, the fact remains that the brains of Irish-speaking peasant men and women have given birth to them, the fact remains that, by wilfully making up his mind to ignore them, and their language, he is committing an act, not merely of egregious folly, but of actual criminality, for which his children and his children's children may curse him yet.

In his folk-songs the Gaelic peasant reveals himself in a new light to us. He shows us a side of his character hitherto unknown and undreamt of. We behold him wandering in an ideal world of his own. Black, dreary bog; damp, half-roofless mud-cabin—these things are forgotten. He shows himself the poet and the dreamer now as of yore. We hear him pouring out, in his folk-songs, his feelings of joy or of sorrow, of love or of hate. We hear the peasant-girl singing by her spinning-wheel, hear the mother crooning over her infant, hear the lover giving utterance, in sweet and passionate language, to the love which fills his soul.

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The rollicking strain of the drinking-song mingles with the sad piercing note of the *caoineadh*,—the plaintive wail of the young mother carried off by the *sluagh-sidhe* mingles with the hymn of love and trust to the *Muire Máthair*. Love, and joy, and sorrow, and hope,—these are the notes that perpetually ring through our folk-poetry, as through our folk-music,—these are the tints that colour the lives and character of our people.

The Gaelic folk-song, be it remembered, is totally distinct, not only from the technical poetry of the ancient bards, but also from the highly-polished, voluptuous, and, as it has been well called, Swinburne-like poetry of the 18th century Munster school. The folk-song proper is the product of a folk-poet, and the common possession of the folk-people. Hence, it possesses those two distinguishing characteristics of the folk-fancy—simplicity of language and beauty of thought.

Simplicity, beautiful and almost childlike simplicity, both of idea and language—this is, above all things, the leading characteristic of Gaelic folk-poetry, as, indeed, of all folk-poetry. The ideas are such as a child might grasp, the language such as a child might use and under-

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stand. Take for instance, such a song as “Eibhlín a Rúin,” probably the best known and most popular in the language. It is possible to conceive anything more beautifully simple than the poet-lover’s declaration?—

“Do fhuadalpáinn an raogal mór leat,
 Déct cleamhnar d’ fagáil ó’m ríóir,
 ’S ní fcarfáinn go deo leatra,
 A Eibhlín a rúin!”

Or his bold impassioned question:—

“A’ dtiocfaid nó’n bfanfaid tú,
 A Eibhlín a rúin?”

Or Eibhlín’s answer:—

“Tiocfaid mé ’r ní fánfaid mé,
 Tiocfaid mé ’r ní fánfaid mé,
 Tiocfaid mé ’r ní fánfaid mé,
 ’S euloḡaid mé le m’ ríóir!”

Take again, say, the “páirtín foinn.” For beautiful and simple effect what would surpass either version of its chorus?—either that beginning:—

“Ir turra mo rúin, mo rúin, mo rúin,”

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Or that other version which commences :—

'S óró, bog liomra, bog liomra, bog liomra. "

Assuredly, language is capable of nothing more inexpressibly soft and melodious than this song.

The extreme simplicity of our folk-songs extends not merely to the thoughts and language but also, very naturally, to the metre. The thought and word parallelism, the intricate internal assonances, the studious employment of alliteration, so characteristic of *literary* Irish poetry—these, as a rule, are absent from the folk-song. The verse-structure is of the simplest imaginable kind. Here, for instance, is the opening stanza of a song in which a peasant-girl caoines for her absent lover :—

" Mo bhrón ar an bfaillige,
Ir é atá mór,
Ir é gabáil iomra mé,
'S mo míle ríór! "

Dr. Hyde's English version of this stanza runs :—

" My grief on the sea,
How the waves of it roll !
For they heave between me
And the love of my soul ! "

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The language and ideas throughout this song are so simple that we may well believe it was the composition of a peasant-woman. Dr. Hyde got it from an old woman named *Biddy Crummey*, who lived in a hut in the middle of a bog in Roscommon. As he mournfully remarks, “*“Τά ρί μαρὺ ἀνοίρ γ α κυρὸ ἀβράν τείτε,”* “She is dead now, and her songs with her.”

One of the chief charms of the folk-imagination is the originality, the quaintness, the oddness of its conception. What could be more delightfully quaint and original than the song composed by the fairies of Knockgraffon, aided by the little hunchback Lusmore? Or, to take a very different example, than that beautiful dialogue, “*Ταὺς ἀγυρ μάιρε,*” one of the finest songs in the language?

It is a remarkable fact that our folk-poetry contains so little of a ballad nature. Love-songs we have, and drinking-songs, and occupation-songs, and lullabies, and *caoineadhs*,—but few songs, if any, which contain a regular story. The nearest approach, perhaps, is in a certain class of religious songs, many of them in the form of a dialogue between Death and a Sinner or Death and a Lady, perhaps, or Death

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and Someone-else,—long and uninteresting enough frequently, to tell the truth. The best example of this kind of religious ballad I have ever come across is a really fine poem called “The Keening of the Three Marys,” which, with a poetical translation, will be found in Dr. Hyde’s “*Δὕμναι Ὁμῶα Χνίγε Κομμαῶτ.*”

Fond as they are of story-telling, the ballad seems to have little attraction for our folk-people. What they delight in, above everything else, is their love-songs ; and accordingly we find that their love-songs are not only the most numerous but also, as a rule, by far the best intrinsically. It is in the love-song that the folk-poet shows best the beauty, and wealth, and originality of his imagination, the depth and tenderness of his soul. The love-song, indeed, is the form in which all the grandest and most poetical aspirations of our nature finds expression. Next to love of God and love of country, love of woman is the noblest feeling that can stir men’s souls ; and well did our Gaelic folk-poets feel this, for they have left us many of the most beautiful and most valuable love-songs in the world.

I have already referred to that wonderful beauty of thought which characterises our folk-songs. What a lovely expression, for instance,

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is “*féalt eolair*,” “star of knowledge,” or “guiding-star,” and how appropriately it is applied by a lover to the one he loves. Another star-comparison—more beautiful still perhaps—is “*féaltan trío an sceó*,” “a star through the mist.” A girl says to her lover :—

“*Δ ὄσαναις οἷς μαρι φέaltan trío an sceó,
‘Oo túgar-ra mo shean sò léir ouit,*”

which Dr. Hyde translates :—

“ Oh ! youth, whom I have kissed like a star
through the mist,
I have given thee this heart altogether.”

What a bold and beautiful comparison is that in “*Ṭad̃s asur m̃áire*” :—

“*‘Da òuib̃e b̃i an s̃raim as luige
loña do s̃núir, a m̃háire,*”—

“ Blacker was the sun at setting than thy face,
my Mary ! ” or, as Dr. Hyde renders it in the exact metre of the original :—

“ The setting sun shows black and dun
And cold beside thee, Mary.”

One more example will suffice. Could lovelier

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or more appropriate similes be found than these ?

“ Δ’ῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖ, Δ ῖῖῖῖῖῖ.

ῖῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖῖ Δῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖ ῖῖ,
Δ’ῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖ ῖῖ

ῖῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖῖῖ Δῖ ῖῖ ῖῖῖῖ ῖῖ ;
Δ’ῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖ ῖῖ

ῖῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖῖῖ ῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖ,
ῖῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖ ῖῖ ῖῖῖῖῖῖῖῖῖῖ,
Δῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖῖ Δ’ῖ ῖῖῖ ῖῖῖῖ ῖῖ ! ”

Dr. Hyde’s translation is :—

“ I thought, O my love ! you were so—

As the moon is, or sun on a fountain,
And I thought after that you were snow,
The cold snow on top of the mountain ;
And I thought after that you were more,
Like God’s lamp shining to find me,
Or the bright star of knowledge before,
And the star of knowledge behind me ! ”

Assuredly the minds which conceived such thoughts and shaped them into such words must have been the minds of true poets. So elevated, so refined, so free from anything approaching coarseness, is the language of these

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songs that it is almost incredible that their authors were peasant men and women. Yet such is the fact. Peasant men and women they were, born and bred in the middle of a bog, perchance, or in a mud-cabin on a mountain-side. Poor they were, the poorest of the poor ; ignorant, too, if you will—ignorant, that is, of reading and writing, ignorant of the English language ; but POETS they were, poets taught by nature herself. Someone has said that poetry is the language of the soul. If this is true, then must our Gaelic folk-poets be poets of the highest order—for their songs come straight from the soul : they are the simple, artless, poetic, outpourings of the souls of a simple, artless poetic people. The folk-poets of our race have left us songs which would do honour to Burns—songs which, considering the circumstances under which they were written, rank, aesthetically, higher than the songs of Burns.

And one great merit the folk-songs of Ireland possess—a merit possessed by the folk-poetry of few nations, a merit possessed by the love-poetry of fewer still. Even Burns himself, true poet as he was, occasionally introduces into his most beautiful love-songs allusions and comparisons which shock all fastidious ears. Never

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do we find this in our Gaelic folk-songs. Pure they are and spotless as the driven snow, like the souls and lives of those who sing them ; sweet they are as the scent of the wild mountain-flowers which grow in their native homes ; musical they are as the ripple of the streamlet, as the note of the blackbird, as the laugh of a happy and innocent girl ; grand they are and time-honoured as the Gaelic race itself. May they never die away on the hillside and in the valley, may they continue to be sung by the hearthside of our people for many a day to come. They are going from us—we feel it, we see it, we know it ; let us save them ere it be too late, and it is not too late yet. Save the language, and the folk-tale, and the folk-song, and all the treasures accumulated in the folk-mind during three thousand years will be saved also. The cause is a holy one—God grant it may succeed ! May our language, and our literature, and our folk-lore live ; and if they live, then, too, will our race live “*go bpuinn an bpáta.*”

THE INTELLECTUAL FUTURE OF THE GAEL *

III

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen—
Though the duties of an Auditor practically begin and end with the delivery of the Inaugural Address, yet the position is, from one point of view, a far from enviable one. Like most posts of honour it is also a post of danger, as on the success or failure of the Inaugural Address depends, to some extent, the success or failure of the Session. The members of the Society have done me the honour of re-electing me to the position of Auditor, and, whilst deeply sensible of this honour, particularly as I know better than anyone how wholly unmerited it is on my part, I cannot but reflect with misgiving that I run the risk of losing any little degree of credit I may have gained by my Inaugural Address last Session. However, I am

* Delivered as Inaugural Address of the Session, '97-'98 (October, '97).

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not given to making excuses : if the Address please you no excuses will be necessary ; and if, as is more probable, it fail to do so, all the excuses I could possibly make would not tend to mend matters in the slightest degree. I prefer, then, to trust to your generosity ; and I shall meekly bear whatever criticisms it may please you to make.

“ The Intellectual Future of the Gael ” is a subject which must, from its very nature, be of the deepest interest to us ; a subject which must be fascinating not only to men and women of Gaelic race, but to all who have at heart the great causes of civilization, education, and progress ; to all who bow before the “ might of mind,” the majesty of intellect ; to all, in short, who take an interest in the intellectual life of mankind—and this is, after all, the true life, for life without intellect is death. To all these, then, but especially to us—to us, Irishmen, young, ardent, enthusiastic, trying to grope amid the darkness for a path to higher things—no question can be of more absorbing interest than this : What has destiny in store for this ancient race of ours ? Is our noonday of glory gone by for ever ? Or have we still a future before us more glorious than we have ever dreamt of in

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our moments of wildest enthusiasm ? I shall try this evening, Mr. Chairman, to find an answer to this question ; and if my ideas on the subject do not exactly coincide with those to which we are accustomed, it is because I believe that the ends which, as a nation, we have hitherto striven to attain are *ignes fatui* which are fated to elude us for ever.

Others have been struck before now by the fact that hundreds of noble men and true have fought and bled for the emancipation of the Gaelic race, and yet have all failed. Surely, if ever cause was worthy of success, it was the cause for which Laurence prayed, for which Hugh of Dungannon planned, for which Hugh Roe and Owen Roe fought, for which Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward and Robert Emmet gave their lives, for which Grattan pleaded, for which Moore and Davis sang, for which O'Connell wore himself out with toil. Yet these men prayed and planned, and fought and bled, and pleaded and wrote, and toiled in vain. May it not be that there is some reason for this ? May it not be that the ends they struggled for were ends never intended for the Gael ? Surely, Mr. Chairman, it would seem so. The Gael is a splendid soldier ; yet it is extremely pro-

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blematic whether we shall ever be a great military nation like Germany or France. The Gael is, and always has been, a cunning artificer, a subtle mechanic ; yet it is almost certain that we shall never be a great manufacturing or commercial nation like England. Does it not seem that a nobler destiny than either of these awaits us ? We have struggled as no other nation has struggled ; we have bled as no other nation has bled ; we have endured an agony compared with which the agonies of other nations have been as child's play. Time after time have we lifted the chalice of victory to our lips ; time after time have we essayed to quaff its delicious contents ; yet time after time has it been dashed to the ground. To-day, after a continuous fight lasting for eight long centuries, we are, Heaven knows, farther off than ever from the goal towards which we have struggled. Who can look at our political and national life at the present moment, and continue to hope ? The men whom we call our leaders are engaged in tearing out one another's vitals, and there is no prospect that they will ever stop. The people are listlessly looking on—for the first time in Irish History they seem to be sunk in apathy.

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We are tempted to cry aloud in our despair, "O God! will the morning *never* come? Yes, the morning *will* come, and its dawn is not far off. But it will be a morning different from the morning we have looked for. The Gael is not like other men; the spade, and the loom, and the sword are not for him. But a destiny more glorious than that of Rome, more glorious than that of Britain awaits him: to become the saviour of idealism in modern intellectual and social life, the regenerator and rejuvenator of the literature of the world, the instructor of the nations, the preacher of the gospel of nature-worship, hero-worship, God-worship—such, Mr. Chairman, is the destiny of the Gael.

Before I proceed to fill in this outline, it may be well if I digress for a few moments, to consider what races have, up to the present, contributed most to the intellectual advancement of mankind. First of all occurs to every mind the name of the Greeks—the pioneers of intellectual progress in Europe. Who can refuse his admiration to the nation which poured forth a stream of fire which to day, after a lapse of three thousand years, is still enlightening and elevating mankind? Mighty changes have passed over

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the earth during those three thousand years ; but the epic sung so long ago by

“ The blind old man of Scio’s rocky isle,” still instructs, and benefits, and delights us. The world’s greatest epic poet, the world’s greatest orator, several of the world’s greatest lyric poets dramatists, and philosophers—these has Greece given to the human race. Next came the Roman : but the Roman directed his splendid energies towards other ends, and, beyond the work accomplished by one or two great men, his influence on intellectual history has not been great—has not, by any means, been proportional to what he might have done. Amongst modern nations those which have contributed most to the intellectual welfare of mankind are undoubtedly Italy, England and Germany. It is the great men of these nations along with those of Greece that have made the literature of the world.

But is it not unquestionable that the influence of these men—the Homers, and Dantes, and Shakespeares, and Miltons—is gradually growing less and less ? Is it not unquestionable also that, at the present moment no literature is being produced in Europe, or in the world, worthy of the name ? The vigorous minds of

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the day are engaged in producing writings which must, from their nature, be purely ephemeral—criticisms reviews, magazine articles—things which, however excellent and highly-finished in themselves, are, as a rule, forgotten as soon as read. Two or three writers are making desperate efforts to achieve fame by selecting the most *outré* and absolutely startling subjects to write of which even their prolific brains can devise. Nowadays no author can hope for popularity unless, like one popular novelist, he goes to Hell for a hero, or, like another, he makes a practice of libelling all that is sacred and sublime under pretence of zeal for liberty and truth. One novel has Satan for its hero, another has God for its villain.

Now, this may be modern, and up-to-date, and all that; but, I ask, is it pure, good healthy, natural literature? Is it literature which tends to exalt the souls, to make us better holier, happier? No, Mr. Chairman, emphatically no. The truth of the matter is that the intellectual and literary tastes of the world have been carried away by a craving for the unreal, for the extravagant, for the monstrous, for the immoral. Men's tastes have become vitiated. There is no healthy out-of-door

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atmosphere in modern literature. Literature has arrived, in short, at a state of unnatural senility, and the time seems not far off when either of two things must happen—either intellect and literature must disappear from modern life, and with them everything that makes life worth living, or some new and unpolluted source must be opened up, some new blood must be infused into the intellectual system of the world, which has become prematurely worn out. Now, whence is this new blood to come? The answer is plain: there is but one race, among the races of to-day, which possesses a literature natural and uncontaminated; there is but one race which possesses an intellectual wealth which, though as old as history, is yet young and vigorous and healthy, and has a future before it rich with undeveloped possibilities. Needless to say, Mr. Chairman, this race is the Gaelic race—a race whose literature is as different from the unnatural literature of to-day as the pure radiance of the sun is different from the hideous glare of the electric light, as the free breath of heaven is different from the stifling atmosphere of a crowded theatre or music hall.

I have indicated, then, Mr. Chairman, what

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seems to me to be the true mission of the Gael, and it will be seen that in this mission the creation, or rather the propagation, of a nature-literature plays a most important part. I do not say the *creation* of a nature-literature, for the excellent reason that it has not to be created : as a matter of fact, it already exists, and only wants to be developed, to be matured, to be expanded. Now, this literature is totally different from every other literature in the world, and this is one of the reasons why it proves so entrancing to everyone who makes a study of it. Gaelic literature, we should remember has grown up among and been developed by the Gael alone. Its sources of inspiration have been entirely native, and in this one point, at least, it can claim superiority even to Greek literature itself. As regards *manner* and *style*, it has been absolutely uninfluenced by the literature of any other nation. This is why it is so unique, so peculiar, so unlike everything else we are accustomed to, so *refreshing*—that is the proper word to apply to it. It has a quaint, old-world magic, and charm, and glamour that mark it as peculiarly fit to accomplish the reformation we have seen to be so necessary.

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To give a more accurate idea of the form this reformation is to take, and of its effects, I would draw special attention to two points in the temperament of the Gael : his love for nature, and his veneration for his heroes. The intellectual life and atmosphere of the present day are, as I have said, nothing if not unnatural. The Gael, on the other hand, like all the Celts, is distinguished by an intense and passionate love for nature. The Gael is the high-priest of nature. He loves nature not merely as something grand, and beautiful, and wonderful, but as something possessing a mystic connection with and influence over man. In the cry of the seagull as he winged his solitary flight over the Atlantic waves, in the shriek of the eagle as he wheeled around the heights of the Kerry Mountains, in the note of the throstle as she sang her evening lay in the woods of Slieve Grot, in the roar of the cataract as it foamed and splashed down the rocky ravine, in the sob of the ocean as it beat unceasingly against the cliffs of Achill, in the sigh of the wind as it moved, ghostlike, through the oaks of Derrybawn—in all these sounds the ancient Gael heard a music unheard by other men, all these sounds spoke to his inmost heart in whispers

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mysterious and but half understood : they spoke to him as the voice of his ancestors urging him to be noble and true—as the voices of the glorious dead calling to him across the waters from Tír na n-Og.

The Gael, believed, too, that the earth and, the air, and the sea were filled with strange beings that exerted a mysterious but potent influence over him. Everyone who has the slightest acquaintance with Gaelic literature knows how this belief appears and reappears on every page ; how the creatures of the upper air and the beast of the forest are represented as sympathizing with the changing fortunes of men ; how, during a battle, the blackbird wails in the wood, the sea chatters telling of the slaughter, the rough hills creak with terror at the assault ; and how, when anything remarkable occurs, such as the death of a hero, or the overwhelming of a favourite champion by unequal odds, the three great waves of Eire cry out—the furious red Wave of Rudhraighe, the foam-stormy, ship-sinking Wave of Cloidhna, and the flood-high, bank-swollen Wave of Tuagh

Closely connected with, and, indeed, directly dependent on this love of the Gael for nature, is

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his capacity for worshipping his heroes. Hero-worship, no doubt, is often carried to extremes ; we are prone too frequently to mistake the hero for the cause, to place the man before the principle. But there can be no doubt that hero-worship, in its highest form, is a soul-lifting and an ennobling thing. What would the world be without its heroes ? Greece without her Hercules and her Achilles, Rome without her Romulus and her Camillus, England without her Arthur and her Richard, Ireland without her Cúchulainn and her Fionn, Christianity without its Loyolas and its Xaviers ? And what is true of hero-worship in general is true, in an especial manner, of the hero-worship of the Gael. When great men die the ancient Gael did not believe that they had passed away for ever from human ken—he believed, on the contrary, that their spirits lingered round the lonely hills and glens, round old moss-grown *lioses* and crumbling *dúns*, round the haunted *sidhe-brughs* and fairy *ráths*—he believed that they hovered near their children, watching over them and taking an interest in their every action. Now, when a man believes that the spirits of the mighty dead, the spirits of those he has loved and venerated, are near him and

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watching over him, he cannot but endeavour to make himself nobler, better, worthier of the great ones who have preceded him.

“ Lives of great men all remind us
We can make *our* lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time.”

The spirit of these words of the great modern American poet was perfectly understood by the ancient Gael. Fearghus, Conchubhar, Cúchulainn, Fionn, Oisín, Oscar—these were more to the Gael than mere names of great champions and warriors of a former time : they represented to him men who had gone before, who had fought the good fight, who had passed from earth to the mystic Tír na n-Og, who had become gods,—but whose spirits, heroic and immortal, still lived after them. And though well-nigh two thousand years have rolled away since those mighty heroes trod this land of ours, yet is their spirit not dead : it lives on in our poetry, in our music, in our language, and, above all, in the vague longings which we feel for a something, we know not what,—our irresistible, overmastering conviction that we, as a nation, are made for higher things. Oh ! that

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this hero-spirit were stronger than it is ! Oh ! that men could be brought to realize that they are MEN, not animals,—that they could be brought to realize that, though “ of the earth, earthy,” yet that there is a spark of divinity within them ! And men *can* be brought to realize this by the propagation of a literature like that of the Gael,—a literature to which nature-love and hero-love shall form the key-words, a literature which shall glorify all that is worthy of glory,—beauty, strength, manhood, intellect, and religion.

The mission of the Gael, however, will not be confined merely to the propagation of this literature. The Gael is, in the fullest sense of the word, an idealist ; he is, in fact, *the* idealist amongst the nations. All that is beautiful, noble, true, or grand will always find in him a devotee. He revels in imagination. He loves to gaze on what is beautiful, to listen to sweet and rapturous sounds. Hence, painting, sculpture, music, oratory, the drama, learning, all those things which delight and ravish the human soul, which stir up in it mighty, convulsive passions, and strange, indefinable yearnings after the Great Unknown, all those things which seem, as it were, links between humanity

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and Divinity—these will ever find among the Gael their most ardent and accomplished disciples. What the Greek was to the ancient world the Gael will be to the modern ; and in no point will the parallel prove more true than in the fervent and noble love of learning which distinguishes both races. The Gael, like the Greek, loves learning, and like the Greek, he loves it solely for its own sake. For centuries, when it was sought by penal legislation to deprive him of it, when the path to honour and wealth was closed to him, and when learning could be of no advantage to him at least from a worldly point of view, still did he cling to it. The spirit which animated our O'Clerys and our Keatings still animated their humbler successors. The hunted priests and schoolmasters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries carried about with them from cave to cave, and from glen to glen, not only copies of the Gospels, but copies of the Greek and Latin classics, and volumes of old Gaelic poetry, history and romance. Hundreds of young men are annually turned out of our modern universities with a classical education far inferior to that imparted in the hedge-schools of Munster during the last century. When love of learning

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is so deeply implanted in the heart of the Gael that not even persecution, penury, and degradation can eradicate it, surely it ought to blaze forth with ten-fold brilliancy when the night is past and the morn is come. The dream of the great English cardinal may yet come true :—

“ I contemplate,” says John Henry Newman, “ a people which has had a long night and will have an inevitable day. I am turning my eyes towards a hundred years to come, and I dimly see the island I am gazing on become the road of passage between two hemispheres, and the centre of the world : I see its inhabitants rival Belgium in populousness, France in vigour, and Spain in enthusiasm ; and I see England taught by advancing years to exercise in its behalf that good sense which is her characteristic towards everyone else. The capital of that prosperous and hopeful land is situate on a beautiful bay, and near a romantic region ; and in it I see a flourishing University. . . . Thither as to a sacred soil, the home of their fathers, the fountain-head of their Christianity, students are flocking from east to west, and south—from America, from Australia and

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India, from Egypt and Asia Minor, with the ease and rapidity of a locomotion not yet discovered ; and last, though not least, from England all owning one faith, all eager for one large true wisdom ; and thence, when their stay is over, going back again to carry over all the earth ' Peace to men of goodwill.' ”

I am aware, Mr. Chairman, that there are many here who may consider that the picture I have drawn is a far too rosy one, who may say that “ The Intellectual Future of the Gael ” is an excellent theme on which one may wax eloquent—is a catchy title, perhaps, for the Inaugural Address of a Literary Society—but that, beyond this, the talk about nature-literature, about hero-love, and the rest, is little more than the raving of an enthusiast. Well, Mr. Chairman, I admit that I *am* an enthusiast, and I glory in being one. To those who would object that the sketch I have attempted to give of the intellectual future of our race is a mere ideal picture, I would reply that it is *intended* as an ideal picture. If you wish to accomplish anything great place an ideal before you, and endeavour to live up to that ideal.

Now, has the Gael been able to attain the

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ideals he has hitherto placed before him or, does it appear likely that he ever will? Assuredly not. Nothing seems to me so certain, nothing seems to me so logical a consequence of our temperament, of our history of our present circumstances, as that, if we are to have any future, it must be an intellectual future. And is there anyone who would not prefer such a future? It is, no doubt, a glorious thing to rule over many subject peoples, to dictate laws of far-off countries, to receive every day cargoes of rich merchandise from every clime beneath the sun ; but if to do these things we must become a soulless, intellectual, Godless race—and it seems that one is the natural and necessary consequence of the other,—then let us have none of them. Do the millions that make up the population of modern nations—the millions that toil and sweat, from year's end to year's end, in the mines and factories of England, the Continent, and the United States—live the life intended for man? Have they intellect? Have they soul? Are they conscious of man's dignity, of man's greatness? Do they understand the grandeur of living, and breathing, and working out one's destiny on this beautiful

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old earth ? The sea, with its mighty thunderings, and its mysterious whisperings, the blue sky of day, the dark and solemn canopy of night spangled with its myriad stars, the mountains and hills steeped in the magic of poetry and romance—what are these things to them ? What are the hero-memories of the past to them ? Are they one whit the better because great men have lived, and wrought and died ? Were the destiny of the Gael no higher than theirs, better for him would it have been, had he disappeared from the earth centuries ago.

Intellect and soul, a capacity for loving the beautiful things of nature a capacity for worshipping what is grand and noble in man, these things we have yet : let us not cast them from us in the mad rush of modern life. Let us cherish them, let us cling to them : they have come down to us through the storms of centuries—the bequest of our hero-sires of old ; and when we are a power on earth again, we shall owe our power, not to fame in war, in statesmanship, or in commerce, but to those two precious inheritances, intellect and soul.

Another thousand years will have rolled over the earth, and the bard, and the *seanchaidh*, and the teacher of the Gael, will once more be

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held in honour. A better, purer, and happier world will be listening in rapt amazement to the grand old epics and time-honoured *sgéalta* of our race. Men's gods will no longer be empire, ambition, and gold : but the homage that is paid to those things to-day will be paid in that happy age, as it was in days of yore, on the hills and in the valleys of Eire, to the mysterious potencies of nature, the beauty and virtue of woman, the heroic dignity of man, the awful and incomprehensible majesty of the Divinity. This, Mr. Chairman, will be the gospel of the future ; and to preach this gospel—world-old, yet new, so true, yet so little realized, so beautiful, and so ennobling—will be the mission of the children of the Gael.

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